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Wagons West

A STORY OF THE OREGON TRAIL

By

ELIZABETH PAGE

Illustrated with Photographs

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TO MY FATHER

Introduction

THE idea of writing this book first came to me when I was eleven years old. My grandmother had just given me a package of old letters written, so she said, by my great-uncle Henry to his wife Mary when he crossed the Plains in '49. We had spent enchanted days reading the letters, and living the life of the frontier farm in Illinois to which they had been sent. Being full of the memory of the fun I had been having, fun which I felt should be shared, I remarked to my mother that I believed I would write a book about Uncle Henry and Aunt Mary.

My mother replied quietly, without even a flicker of amusement in her eyes:

"Then, my dear, you should read Bret Harte, and Parkman's OREGON TRAIL." So the work of building up a background for this book began.

Most of the material which has been collected came from my grandmother, who was Mary's youngest sister, Angie. As she had lived with Henry and Mary during the time when she was going to school, and as she later married Henry's younger brother Charles, she had an intimate knowledge of both families. Her memory was almost photographic and she had also a scrupulous regard for truth not always coupled with the story-teller's art. Often as she repeated the tales she unearthed for me—and she told them over and over at my request until they came to seem almost experiences of my own—she never varied the details nor altered the phrasing of a conversation. She was no longer living when the actual work of composition began, but her brother Richard, although he was then in his ninetieth year, came to my assistance with a memory as trustworthy as hers. With the advantage of four more years of age he could add a

host of incidents to the record. William's homecoming and Mary's wedding are contributions from him. He also recalled with peculiar distinctness the circumstances surrounding the start to California, for he had wanted to go with "the boys," and he could still look rueful over the fact that his pleadings had been denied. I visited him several times in his home in Missouri to gather up his memories, and we carried on a voluminous correspondence until his final illness and death.

Judge Frank Burton of Carlinville, Illinois, the son of Henry's partner in the enterprise of 1849, found for me the Bowman and Hackney diaries to corroborate the account given by the letters and to fill in the gaps caused by the loss of some of them. And Mrs. Burton made it possible to visit the localities where Henry and Mary had been. Further details were supplied by Mary McMillan, Henry's granddaughter, and by his niece, Mrs. Evelyn Rider Minier; and beyond the bounds of the family, Mrs. Adele Cutting of Clayville, New York, made accessible documents relating to the now vanished town of Litchfield. Picking up a trail that in some cases had been cold for a hundred years was not always simple, but help came from the most unexpected sources, as when a Traveller's Aid in the railroad station at Utica unravelled one mystery, and a chance acquaintance on a transcontinental train supplied an important clue for another. To all these friends and to the many librarians who have run my dusty errands I wish here to extend my thanks.

The method of handling the mass of material brought together I owe to Dr. Lucy Textor of Vassar and Dr. Herbert Osgood of Columbia, sound scholars who gave strict training in painstaking research. The statements in letters, diaries and oral tradition have been checked and rechecked in accordance with their standards and in consequence should present a fair degree of historical accuracy.

In the actual task of writing I received my first encouragement from Morley Roberts, whose criticism and suggestions were of the greatest value. But I also must express my appreciation to Mrs. Katherine Perry Shaw, Carl M. Chapin and Helen D. Lock-

wood, who have kindly read the manuscript at later stages of its construction.

I have been impelled to write this book because I believe that the qualities of these men and women are general rather than particular, and that this generality embraces not only their characters but their lives. If they are for the most part obscure individuals, if they rarely lead but are rather found among the crowd of the led, if failure and disappointment loom larger in their experience than adventure and success, they are for these very reasons more fittingly the mouthpiece of otherwise voiceless thousands. Of such men and women were the rank and file of the pioneers who made American tradition, and if no epic flavor remains in this record of their endeavor, the fault lies not with the actors but with the one who recounts their deeds.

ELIZABETH PAGE.

May 2, 1930.

Contents

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	vii
	Part I. Tradition: FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE MISSISSIPPI	
CHAPTER		
I.	A YOUNG MAN FROM NEW ENGLAND	3
II.	A GENTLEWOMAN IN THE WEST	31
III.	THE QUARREL	62
	Part II. Record: FROM THE MISSISSIPPI TO THE PACIFIC	
IV.	"THEY HAVE DECIDED TO GO ON"	89
V.	THE GREAT EMIGRATION	110
VI.	A NEW WORLD	133
VII.	THE SECOND MILE-POST	149
VIII.	IN SIGHT OF GOLD	174
IX.	BEARDED MINERS	194
X.	GOLD GOES HOME	227
XI.	NEXT-DOOR TO FORTUNE	255
XII.	THE EXPRESS RIDER	285
XIII.	DEBIT AND CREDIT	326
	APPENDIX A.	331
	APPENDIX B.	333
	APPENDIX C.	336
	APPENDIX D.	342
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	349
	INDEX	353

List of Illustrations

	PAGE
Sutter's Mill:	*Frontispiece*
View in Salt Lake City	48
A Typical Encampment of the Trail	49
The Courthouse at Independence, Missouri	64
The Missouri River	65
A Facsimile Letter from Henry Page to His Wife	96
Crossing the Rockies	97
Crossed the Big Blue	112
We Are Now A-Following Up the Valley of the Little Blue	112
The Famous Crossing of the South Platte	113
The Strange Shallow River	113
Hunting Buffalo on the Great Plains	128
A Town of Prairie Dogs	129
Covered with Small Stunted Cedars	144
Majestic Bluffs	144
Still Keep Up the Platte	145
We Crossed Over to the North Fork	145
Fort Laramie's Massive Ruins	152
Fort Laramie	153
Ascended a Long Rocky Hill	164
The Roughest Hillyest Road	164
A Gigantic Register of the Trail	165
The Platte River Is Deeper Here	165
The Forks of the Road	172
We Struck Green River	172

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Raised the Level in the American River	173
Into Bear Valley	
Camped on the Sweetwater	170
Alkali Lakes Looked Like a Bed of Silver	176
The Log Store with the Porch in Front	177
The House Built by Hank Burton	177
Down the Snake River	184
Shadows of Jagged Boulders	184
A Pass in the Mountains	185
The Country Very Rough and Broken	185
Twenty-four Pairs of Ruts Side by Side	192
The Ridge We Have to Cross	192
We Had to Lower Our Wagons by Ropes	193
On the Banks of the Big Nemahah	193
Truckee Canyon	196
On a Large Bend of the River	197
The Main Difficulty	197
The Humboldt Desert	204
We Came in Sight of Truckee River	204
The Ellett Place	205
Truckee Meadows	205
Chimney Rock	224
Donner Lake	224
This Is the Spot Where the Donner Party Perished	225
Donner Lake from the East	225
Turkey Creek	240
Beautyful Lakes	240
Panning	241
The Rocker or Cradle Method of Mining	264
The Gold Diggings	265

Part One; Tradition

FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE MISSISSIPPI

CHAPTER I

A Young Man from New England

THE boy Henry started down the attic stairs and then paused, for behind him the children were calling. He looked back over his shoulder. Even on days of sunshine the light from the fan-shaped windows at either gable end could not penetrate far, and to-day when rain was drumming on the shingles the columns of the ascending chimneys marked off an uncertain expanse. In this dimness lurked decrepit pieces of furniture, ready to trip the unwary. Here and there shapeless objects drooped pendulous from pegs in the rafters, a basket, a bunch of herbs, or a saddlebag, stiff with age; and boxes and horsehide trunks studded with nails crouched in the darkness under the eaves. It was a perfect place for hide and seek, and on rainy days the children made of it a kingdom all their own, where they could romp undisturbed for hours, playing the active games that somehow seemed out of place in the quiet peace of the rooms downstairs. They shouted and flitted back and forth while the little boy watched them from the second step. Then the silent spell of the house below which had called him away from the others seemed to float up the stairs and envelope him. Under cover of a burst of laughter he stole away to wander about alone.

He loved the white-curtained bed in his mother's room, and the big winged armchair near her fireplace. He rested his elbows on the window-sill and listened to the rain whispering in the leaves of the lilac bush outside, content that the voices of the other children should be faint and far away. The house his father had built was large and brooding, with extended wings to shelter the grow-

ing family. It stood back from Rutland's main street, overshadowed at one end by the spreading crown of a young sycamore. If little Henry leaned from the window he could see the twisted lower branches of this tree which always seemed to him to be made for climbing. In summer and by day its green tent was a constant invitation. At night, however, it became remote and eerie, a dome of black shadows where ghostly white limbs caught unexpected gleamings from the moon; and in winter the stripped nakedness of its blotched and writhing arms held something repulsive, which the children were glad to have masked by the first wet snows. Only Spring and the veil of the reappearing leaves could make them quite forget the ugly sight. Behind the house and the sycamore tree, the garden fell away a bit, giving a view of the main range of the Green Mountains, where the leaning peak of Killington looked down upon the town. Henry and the other children had learned to watch for the clouds on the mountains that told of coming showers, for on rainy days like this they could not go out to the brook in the garden, to sail stick-boats or to fish with bent pin and alder pole, but rather must find what amusement they could in the house.

The child turned from the window. He had escaped from the others, now he would make the rounds of the house. Should he go to the kitchen? He was always fascinated by its unending activity, by the black bulk of the hanging kettle against the red glow of the embers, by the fragrance of bread briefly glimpsed when the door of the brick oven was opened; but the busy servants would not long tolerate little people under foot. Perhaps it would be better just to stand for a while in the doorway of his father's library. He was awed by the rows and rows of brown-backed books which lined the walls and he never ventured to enter lest he disturb the busy man at the desk, but he liked to be there. If later in the living-room he should find his half-sister Frances sitting at her sewing perhaps he might lean against her shoulder to watch the shining needle flash in and out again. And if she raised her eyes to smile at him his cup of happiness would be full.

To the little boy, this half-sister and her brother, "William T.", the oldest of them all, were beings apart. William T. had always seemed a man to the younger child. His walk, his gestures, and his tricks of speech were things to be imitated, his notice conferred a singular distinction, his protection, when he deigned to extend it, was a sure defense. Henry planned to be like William T. when he should grow up. And Frances filled a place in his imagination which otherwise might have been left empty—that usually occupied by the fairy tales which he might not read. She was his shining princess endued with every grace and charm. His adoration undoubtedly was colored by gratitude for it was she who made the difficult Sabbaths tolerable for her younger brothers and sisters.

In the Page home the Sabbath began at sunset on Saturday evening. When the long light slanted through the western window-panes, the children must begin to gather up their toys which were put away until sunset on Sunday. The books, all save a very few which dealt with holy things, were set on their shelves, and games and play ceased. There were certain tasks to be performed. The catechism must be memorized, and after their father had founded that first Sunday School in the Congregational Church on Center Street, they had a lesson to learn; but when these were done, when the four hours of the church services were over, the time would have stretched into endless emptiness, if it had not been for Frances. Drawing on the lore in the brown-backed books of her father's library, she entertained the younger children with stories that fell within the range of things allowed because they were both "true and instructive." Everything she touched on became instinct with life, and the folk in her narratives moved and breathed, while the children sat motionless fearing to miss a word, and even an occasional grown person noiselessly joined the silent group. The Sabbath sun might set, and week-day shadows gather in the corners and march across the room, but not one would stir until the tale was ended.

The pageant which Frances created for them week by week set

forth a succession of knights in shining armor and waving plumes, who followed their kings, now to Scotland, now to the Holy Land. Again they were back in England on the lands in Devon which the Pages still called their English home drilling a troop of six hundred archers for the opening campaigns of the Hundred Years' War. Frances told them it was the English archers that turned the tide of battle at Crécy and put England in the saddle for a while in France. It was thrilling and glittering but remote, and Henry's imagination did not take fire until they came to that John Page, a descendant of the Devon family, who was born in the Middle Temple and passed his boyhood in Shakespeare's London.

His sister had painted for them the brilliant little city, until Henry wondered how the young lawyer could turn his back on the many-colored crowds in its narrow streets, where the old nobility rubbed elbows with the upstart merchant princes, and knightly adventurers jostled the picturesque men of the sea. Even though he had taken sides with the Puritans in the religious dispute, he must have found it hard to move away to the little town of Dedham where the leaders of the party were in seclusion. The boy could more easily understand why he should have joined the Great Emigration when a thousand people under Governor Winthrop set sail for the Western World with a charter to found the colony of New-England. Here was a venture into the unknown which would stir any young man's blood.

Frances told them that John Page with his wife and three little children had gone down to Cowes where the *Jewel* lay at anchor in the sheltered waters between the mainland and the Isle of Wight. Three other ships swung at their moorings beside her, among them the *Arbella,* which was to be Winthrop's flagship, seven more were making ready at Southampton. A confused mass of people was gathered on the wharves. There were the colonists and their friends who had come to see them off. There were last minute messengers passing to and fro, and ship officers moving about on mysterious errands. There were the busy sailors who hustled the passengers that

had already gone aboard into out of the way corners of the deck, while they marshaled the chaos of ship's stores and settlers' belongings into orderly stowage for the hold. One of these was a jaunty fellow who enlivened his toil and horrified the pious by a stream of fantastic oaths. Occasionally the shipmasters held a hurried conference with the governor and all eyes followed them. Then one brisk morning in late March the hurly-burly died down. Sails were set and the crews were singing at the capstan bars as they ground the heavy anchors up to the decks. It was the year 1630 and the Great Emigration was under way.

Henry could almost see the *Jewel* with her high prow and higher clumsy stern plunging along in the wild seas of the channel storm that overtook them, when the distant shape of the *Arbella* could scarcely be discerned. It was a rough beginning for the women and children. One day two strange ships were sighted which might have been the Spanish enemy, and when the little fleet huddled together for protection the *Jewel* collided with the *Ambrose*. The rigging of the giant yardarms were entangled, the *Jewel's* great foresail was torn and one of her anchors was broken. For a moment all was confusion, and it was well for the fouled ships that the strange craft proved to be harmless trading vessels which would not keep the colonists from going on their way. The damage was such that the sailors could make repairs in a few hours, and there was no further delay, yet the three months' voyage to New England was hardly uneventful. A baby was born on board and there was one death, that of the fantastically profane seaman whose untimely passing was the subject of much pious meditation. One of the other ships sprang a leak and had to pump her way over the Atlantic, while the *Success* ran short of food because of the loss of her goats which had been swept overboard in the gale in the English Channel.

When they reached the shores of Massachusetts, hunger and sickness awaited them,* for the advance guard which had been sent ahead the year before to plant the crops had sickened with the

* The situation is reflected in letter found in Appendix A.

scurvy in the long winter, and nothing had been done. Through the weary months which elapsed before a ship sent to England could return with aid, through the heart-breaking toil of clearing forest land and building even a rude shelter—work to which the lawyer from London could hardly have been accustomed—John Page held on. Henry was proud to remember that he was one of those who stayed when many turned back on the homeward-bound vessels. When his first house burned to the ground he rebuilt it at once, larger and better than before, and in the end he wrested not only a living but dignity and ease from the niggardly soil.

Step by step Frances showed them the descendants of this John Page forcing their way into the wilderness, persistent and undismayed, selecting their town sites, carving out their puny farms, rousing at night to ward off Indian attack, fleeing with their wives and children before the overwhelming horde, returning when the wavering attention of the savage moved on to some other object, returning and returning again like that other John Page who assisted three times at the founding of Groton before he secured a permanent foothold. So they made their way from the Charles to the Connecticut and over the Green Mountains to Rutland.

* * *

The boy Henry was seven years old, with many things to think about. He was going to school and finding a whole world of books opening before his fascinated eyes, and he was discovering those Other Children beyond the circle of his brothers and sisters. From small rebuffs and tentative advances he was learning of whom he must be wary and which ones he could count among his friends. Easily the chief among these last, to his way of thinking, was Henry Sheldon. The boys were constantly together and as the Sheldons lived near at hand there were now places to play other than the attic, the garden and the sycamore tree.

Insensibly the boy was slipping into a new place in his family. He was now one of the older children with little brothers to defend

from outside attack. Frances was still his shining princess, but there was also his baby sister Julia whose little hands held out to him gave him a stranger thrill than anything he had so far known. And there was his father. William Page had been too busy and at times too stern a man to win the confidence of a little child, but the growing boy boasted of his father's achievements. His father was the best lawyer in the State of Vermont, he declared, and for a wonder he was not far from the mark. But his father also was an engineer and a banker as well; and if any one doubted the last statement he could point through the window of the brick building that was the First National Bank of Rutland. The children passed it on their way to school, and the days when their father walked with them from the white house under the sycamore tree were days of gold to Henry. He tried to keep in step with the grown man's stride, an effort which would have rendered him completely breathless, if William had not unobtrusively altered his pace to fit the boy's capacity. A real companionship was growing up between them, even if it was mostly a silent one, a matter of occasional looks or a smile exchanged. William recognized the boy's developing mind and now when he returned from one of his business trips to faraway Boston or even New York he never made the mistake of bringing him a toy. Toys were for the little children, and trinkets for the girls, but books were the proper gifts for William T. and Henry.

All the children learned to look forward to these times for something in the joy of the traveler's return relaxed the discipline of the family for an evening. Bed hours were set aside for once and they gathered at the fireplace in the living-room, Henry with his new book clasped between his hands and Julia curled up like a kitten by his side, to listen while William talked. Then it was easy to see where Frances had found the secret of absorbing narration. When all the details of the journey had been canvassed, when the busy harbors with the tall-masted ships and the crowded city streets had been described, sometimes there was time for just one more story. Then the children always had the same plea. Let them hear about

the canal or about the New Hampshire grants. And if they had their wish, they settled back to listen with that pleasure in meeting old friends which is so large a part of the charm of a twice told tale.

In the days before the Revolution, William would begin, the colony of New Hampshire had given lands to settlers along the Connecticut River, and bands of men with their families began moving into the valley. Among these men went the children's grandfather, Doctor William Page, to establish himself in one of the river towns. Others of his neighbors and friends pushed up the river, out into the valleys of the Green Mountains, and even crossed the main range to make their clearings on the westward side. But before long bad news came trickling back along the new-made trails. The very land which the New Hampshire men had cleared was claimed under royal charter by the colony of New York. Wealthy landowners were pushing their legal rights and bringing powerful pressure to bear on the Governors of both colonies. At any time the settlers might be evicted, and no one in any part of the Green Mountains or the Connecticut Valley could be sure of the title to his holding.

Naturally enough, the New Hampshire men who had done the work of exploration and opening the country felt they had a right to keep their hard bought acres, and they united for defense. The first attack was directed against the mountain settlers. But later the encroachments of New York extended to take in the Connecticut Valley towns, and when this happened Doctor Page soon became a leader in the fight to keep the land for the men who had worked for it. The Revolution had begun and there was confusion and danger without, as well as uncertainty within. An appeal was made to New Hampshire for protection, but the parent colony showed signs of a compromise. They would surrender to New York all west of the Connecticut River, if they might keep the east bank towns. Charlestown, where Doctor Page lived, would have been inside New Hampshire's jurisdiction, and his land title would have been safe,

but he refused to consent to a scheme which would abandon the cause of his friends across the river. Separation from New Hampshire and union with the mountain settlers' commonwealth of Vermont was the only other course possible, so he went up to the Green Mountain capital at Windsor as Charlestown's representative, and returned the duly appointed Sheriff for Vermont in charge of the newly acquired territory.

But all this activity was very distasteful to the colony of New Hampshire. Public feeling ran high, and when General Bellows suggested that it might be well to arrest the ringleaders of the revolt, if it could "be secretly and prudently attempted," preparations were set on foot at once. One Colonel Hale was sworn in as Sheriff by the New Hampshire legislature and dispatched with two soldiers by night to take Doctor Page into custody. It was shortly after Christmas, when nightfall comes early, and Charlestown was deep in sleep when the three horsemen trotted up to Doctor William's door. Roused from his bed to listen to the reading of the warrant—"by virtue of the authority vested in me by the State of New Hampshire"—the doctor was not for a moment at a loss.

"By virtue of the authority vested in me by the State of Vermont," he retorted, "I place you and your escort under arrest. And as I am on my own ground and can raise six hundred men on the shortest notice, the Sheriff from New Hampshire would be wise to submit to detention."

Colonel Hale was no fool. He thought it over and agreed to be lodged under guard in a house nearby.

But if the first round left Page victorious, the tables were soon turned, for when the doctor went up to Exeter, as he thought to lay the case of the Connecticut River towns before an impartial tribunal, he was seized and thrown into the common jail, nominally because he had "accepted the office of Sheriff under the usurped authority of Vermont," but actually as a hostage for Hale. Then came a letter from General Washington to the Vermont legislature asking that the new state as a preliminary to its admission

to the union relinquish all claims east of the Connecticut. Vermont assented to his request and conceded Charlestown—with Doctor Page—to the New Hampshire authorities. If the doctor had not been a colonel in the Continental army and the surgeon of a New Hampshire regiment to boot, it might have gone hard with him. Even as it was, when Vermont after ten more years of opposition finally took her place among the United States, certain of Doctor William's neighbors still resented the active part he had taken in bringing about the decision. They held that New Hampshire had been robbed of territory which might have been hers, and so violent was the feeling that Doctor Page thought it wisest to remove his family into the new state. "And that," William would conclude, "is how we Pages came into Vermont."

The story of the Canal was shorter, and William had played a part in it, although his doctor father still held the leading rôle. A few years after the family had settled in Bellows Falls, Vermont, the townspeople conceived the idea of building a canal to carry boats around the rapids in the Connecticut River which gave the town its name. The engineer chosen to plan and execute the project was Doctor William Page. The scheme promised to be difficult of performance and the doctor summoned to his aid his son William, then recently graduated from Yale, to bring his college wisdom to the problem. Together they struggled with grades and locks and water pressures. There was a fall of forty-four feet to be accommodated, and a cut to be made through solid rock. A mistake would be costly and father and son labored late and burnt out many candles over the plans.

When the work of actual construction began, they followed the digging crews, foot by foot—a quarter of the way through, half way, three quarters—and then disaster loomed. A sudden flood had raised the river and rain was continuing to fall. It was a question whether the temporary dams built to hold the water out of the upper end of the excavation would stand the uncalculated strain. William and his father paced the bank while the digging crews

filled sandbags, and the townspeople looked on. Day fell, and torches were lit to flare and sputter in the rain. Inch by inch the swirling river crept up the planking. A trickle of water started through, and bags were hurriedly shifted to meet a new strain. Rocks from the canal banks and felled trees chained together were lowered on the river side. Men worked feverishly up to their waists in water, while hour by hour the river rose. There came the time when the two men on the bank realized that further struggle was useless. The digging crews were called up out of danger, and silently engineers and workmen watched the flood work its will. Planking crumpled suddenly, and with a roar the waters leaped in to overwhelm the new made channel. None of these weary men had anything to say. One by one they moved away into the darkness, and at last the doctor and his son turned their backs on the wreck of their hopes and plans. Sleep was impossible and dawn drew them back again. The waters were gone, and with them had been carried the gates and framing of the locks. Only the changes in level showed where these works had been, but there at the end the flood had dug its channel to the river, broad, deep, scoured clean. Doctor William looked at his son. Shoring could be replaced, gates might be set up once more, and here was the canal completed from end to end. "The Lord had held us in His hand," was William's conclusion. "In one night He had finished what had been for us the heavy toil of months."

This assertion was typical of Henry's father. William Page was one of those for whom the austere religion of his time was an all pervading influence. Not only was he an elder in the church and superintendent of the Sunday School, but he carried the implications of his faith into his everyday life with a depth of sincerity which made a lasting impression on his son. In his mother also Henry felt this religious devotion, but he was always a little afraid of his mother, with her rigid sense of right and her brusque speech which could be scathing in its denunciation of wrong-doing. Religion for her was a scrupulous performance of every duty and in this

she trained the children. Out of the perplexing series of commandments and prohibitions Henry's sensitive conscience might have made a nightmare, if his father's influence had not intervened. Now the boy was finding something warm, vital and sustaining, which he could not understand as yet but which he knew would be a part of his very self.

* * *

Henry had been summoned to the library. William sat at his desk idle, though his books and papers lay about him, and Henry knew when he entered the room that something serious was afoot. Without even motioning to a seat, William began to talk at length and earnestly. Sometimes his eye rested on the slight figure of his twelve-year-old son, but more often they were on the sunny garden beyond the open window. There were long pauses when Henry could hear a fly blundering against the window-pane. William said his wish was that every son of his should be able to choose what his life should be. If a boy desired to devote himself to business, William would give him enough money to make his start. If he wanted a college education, the same money would be used to put him through school. The decision must be made early, for if college were selected there must be time for the preparation. This choice had been given to William T., and now it was Henry's turn to make up his mind. Simply, painstakingly, the lawyer placed before his son what he considered to be the advantages and disadvantages of either mode of life. He stressed neither the one nor the other. He explained and left them there.

Henry's thoughts, bewildered, groped among his familiar ideas. He was going to be like William T. when he grew up. William T. had made his decision and was already established in his store on Merchant's Row. But his father of whom he was so proud had gone to college. Perhaps unconsciously the boy responded to what was a conscious suppression of pleading in the man.

He laid his hand upon the desk.

"I believe I shall take the college," said Henry Page.

A signal had been given and change was following upon change. School was different, for he and Henry Sheldon were having extra hours in Latin and Greek. With one or two other boys they were being drilled for the examinations they must pass if they would enter college. And home had been altered, for Frances was going to be married.

When Henry first understood the world seemed to spin under his feet. Frances was to be married and go away with Mr. Waller. She was much too busy with her sewing and shopping and planning to have much time for the younger children on week-days and soon she would not even be there to tell them stories on Sunday afternoons. Henry had nothing against Mr. Waller. He liked the man in fact. But fiercely he resented this change. He had always felt that Frances belonged to him, and now it seemed he had been mistaken. The girl's joy in her flutter of preparation was a pretty thing to see, and usually he could hide his dismay, but as the month of January drew near concealment became increasingly difficult, and when the wedding was over and Frances was gone, he found that home had lost something of its hold on him. At times he longed secretly to get away, a longing of which he was more than a bit ashamed. Although he never spoke of it, William may have sensed the boy's restlessness and guessed its cause, for he decided to send him to Kimball Academy at Meriden in New Hampshire for his last year of preparation. The break with home would be complete, for Henry must cross that range of the Green Mountains that hitherto had bounded his world. He would see the Connecticut River Valley where his grandfather had fought the battle of the New Hampshire Grants. He would leave behind the familiar and the known. Moreover, he would make the journey alone, which in itself would be something of an adventure.

Once again his father summoned him to the library, this time to give him his money for his school year. William had prepared a small account book and he showed the boy how to enter his credit and expenses. He would ask an accounting of every penny at the end

of the year, and Henry must be ready for criticism if William did not approve the use to which the money had been put.

Henry felt very grown up and responsible as he carried the account book upstairs and placed it with the pile of his clothing which his mother had sorted and laid aside to be put in the nail-studded trunk. There followed busy days filled with bustle. Cynthia superintended the packing, and little Julia busily trotted to and fro, carrying the handkerchiefs and socks. Then one morning the eastbound stage stopped before the door, and Henry climbed up to his place by the driver. The horsehide trunk was hoisted into the boot and his first journey began.

* * *

Henry stood on the steps of the Duncan house where he roomed, and looked up the snow-covered road to the white building on the hill. He was an old boy at Kimball now. He had been there several months, but he still could get a thrill from watching the fellows pour out of the houses and troop up from all sides to the Academy gates. There were nearly two hundred of them and an occasional girl from the neighborhood. When once he stepped into that stream he would no longer have time to think of home or Frances, and Frances was in his mind that morning. He wished that she were beside him to see the thronging boys. She would be quick to feel the rhythm of their on-coming and she would rejoice in the outline of the "ledges" against the sky, and the blue cone of Mt. Ascutney.

The clang of the bell set him running. He must not be late, above all things he must not be late. The hurry of the day engulfed him. Latin and Greek, more Latin and Greek, with arithmetic and geography for variation. These were the four studies required for college entrance, and the teachers demanded his utmost effort. Under the rigorous discipline of the Academy he was forming habits of study which were to stand him in good stead.

Religion which he had borrowed from his father was being rounded out, deepened, made his own. It was a very real thing at Kimball, this religion of his father's, and much stress was laid on it,

not only at the chapel services, but in the spoken argument and unexpressed implication of the classroom. It informed the urgencies of that January day, giving meaning to whatever of sternness there may have been in its discipline. Before night he had need of all possible comfort, for word had come that Frances was dead.

* * *

The northbound stage rattled along the highroad. Henry was on his way to Middlebury to enter the college of which his father was a trustee and Henry Sheldon was by his side. Buttoned into a pocket tight against his chest was a bond to deposit with the college treasurer as a guarantee for the paying of his bills. As he breathed he could feel it rustling. Henry's eyes may have rested on the passing trees and houses, his ears may have been besieged by the laughter and chatter of his fellow travelers, but his thoughts were busy with his father who had given him the bond. It was in the library in the presence of the same russet-backed books that had witnessed his first step on this road to college. William had explained that if the boy wished he might have the assistance and advice of one of his father's friends living in Middlebury in deciding on the appropriation of this money, but William believed his son to be capable now of managing his own affairs and he would no longer exact an accounting. Those were his words and Henry's heart was filled with a high resolve to justify that confidence.

They were coming into Middlebury and the driver pointed out the buildings of the school. There was the old frame East College in the hollow near the stage road, and almost half a mile away on the brow of a hill was set the West College built of gray stone with dignified square lines and a sloping roof studded with a comforting array of chimneys. Between the two stretched a meadow surrounded by a picket fence. Young trees which had been planted to shade the walk from one building to the other were in their autumn splendor, but they had not yet grown high enough to shut out the amphi-

theater of encircling hills, when the two boys from Rutland climbed up to the West College to register in the Class of Thirty Seven.

Long before dawn on winter mornings they joined one hundred and fifty-eight other shivering boys for prayers in the unheated chapel dimly lighted by the unsteady flame of candles. From that hour until the evening lights were put out at ten o'clock, Henry's every move was subject to regulation. He rose, he ate, he studied, he prayed, he debated, he even slept by the bell. Each week began with the Monday morning work on the Greek Testament, then class followed study hour, and study hour succeeded class. A pause was allowed him for lunch and on Wednesday afternoons there was an extra chapel service. He had an ample chance for practice in public reading, speaking and debating before the whole college on Wednesday afternoons, or after the evening prayers before the students were dismissed to bed. He even had an opportunity for "profitable and regular exercise" in the mechanical shop of the Manual Labor Department; that is, if he were a member of the Mechanical Association, that pet project of President Bates. But no time was ever set aside for recreation or relief from the routine. As might have been expected there was periodic revolt. Wild and destructive fights between the classes began over nothing and ended as senselessly. Suddenly Henry and his forty-three classmates would run amuck. The tutor who was also the librarian was swept aside, the three professors and even the President were equally helpless. The ringing of the bell which usually ruled the day only added to the clamor. Chairs and desks were no longer furniture, they were the ammunition and barricades of war. Riot prevailed until exhaustion set it. Then there was a wreck of more or less appalling dimensions to be restored to order and heavy bills for damages to be painstakingly apportioned and levied on the students involved.

Without this item for damages the college did not make extensive inroads on the sum of money covered by William's bond. By his Senior year Henry was accustomed to such bills as this:

Tuition, quarter ending Feb. '37	$5.00
Roomrent	2.00
Recitation Room	.20
Sweeping and Ringing Bell	.25
Use of Library	.50
Repairs and Incidental Expenses	.80
Laboratory Fee	.50
Fines	.50
Damages	
Total	$9.75

Board was a separate item and amounted to fifty dollars a year.

Like much of New England in the early half of the nineteenth century, Middlebury was seething with interest in the opening West. Societies for encouraging emigration were springing up all over the East and were doing their utmost to foster the idea, which a few years later found its chief spokesman in Horace Greeley, that over the Alleghanies lay the land of opportunity. Vermont was already becoming crowded, and the college was but reflecting a general enthusiasm when knots of students gathered on the campus paths to talk of Ohio, of Illinois, and even of far-away Michigan. Those who had situations waiting for them in the villages and towns near at hand looked with envy upon an adventurer like Henry Page who could plan to go West to seek his fortune as soon as he graduated.

And Henry would have changed places with no one. He had talked his scheme over with his father and William T., who were arranging to give him letters of introduction to business correspondents in Chicago, a city then considered a close neighbor to Ultima Thule. If William felt any disappointment in the choice which his son was making he did not express it. He made certain that Henry understood that he might have made his start in life in Rutland with his father to back him if he had so wished it. He indicated the contrast that the boy must expect, the obstacles he would be sure to encounter, in an attempt to make his way in a new country. Having presented the alternatives of the situation he left it to

his son, as he had done at that earlier turning-point in this boy's career. Heedless this time of what may have been his father's unspoken pleading, Henry had given his decision joyously for Chicago. What, to him, were ease and security when weighed in the balance with adventure?

* * *

He left Rutland in the fall of 1837, and he probably had a seat on the Red Bird, the crack coach that made the run from Montreal to Albany in twenty hours. He swept along over well kept roads, putting up at finely appointed inns like the Equinox House in Manchester, where every hostler knew his particular buckle, and teams could be changed in less time than it would have taken the travelers to stretch their cramped legs. Henry was to remember that stage later in his journey.

At Albany he booked a passage on one of the fast packet boats of the Erie Canal, paying five dollars for a first class ticket to Buffalo and two dollars extra for meals, and was informed that two boats left daily. At the Canal Terminal he found the great gayly painted boat busily taking on its load. There were cargo decks forward and a promenade for the passengers on the flat cabin roof. Under the guidance of a member of the crew Henry made his way aft, past crew's quarters and the women's cabin to a large compartment which extended to the stern of the vessel, and which was evidently the main gathering-place. A number of the passengers were already aboard and their piled luggage littered the room. Some were employing the last moments before departure in writing letters. Two old men seated on their bags, a board balanced on their extended knees, were engrossed in a game of backgammon. Some one was fingering the organ at the forward end of the cabin. Henry left his bags in the space indicated by his guide and escaped to the deck, whence he could watch the final loading. At last the gangplanks were drawn in, the great draught horses were harnessed to the tow rope, and lines were cast off. The driver shouted, the horses strained,

and slowly the boat began to move. Smoothly, silently, the pace quickened. The packet was started on its stately way to the West.

At meal time there was a general drift toward the main cabin where Henry had left his bags, and he followed in the wake of the other passengers. Two members of the crew, under the direction of the captain, had cleared the luggage from the center of the room and set up a series of trestles that acted as supports for the long boards of an improvised table on which a steward was placing the dishes for the meal. The passengers drew near and ranged themselves on either side, each man selecting his own place. When the meal was over, the captain and his crew reappeared, the boards and trestles were carried off to some invisible storage place, and the bags and bundles were meticulously restored to their original places where their owners might claim them. The two old men resumed their backgammon and Henry and the others made their way back to the deck.

At night, after the ladies had withdrawn to their own quarters, another transformation was effected by the captain and his helpers. Three tiers of shelves were attached to the side walls of the cabin and assigned to the various men. Henry examined his with interest. It was six feet long and three and a half feet wide, and was held in position by slender wrought iron braces at either outer corner. He tested it gingerly, but found it amazingly firm. He was given a thin straw pad covered with blue canvas, a lumpy pillow and a blanket. With these and his great-coat he must make shift for the night. His bunk was on the top tier, a position which he considered entirely favorable in event of a possible collapse, but which proved to be difficult of access. A scant two feet intervened between the pallet and the beams of the deck above, and the resultant cramping hindered his climb. Elbows and knees were well bruised by the time he was at last stretched out, but he could forget his own difficulties in watching the antics of his fellow-travelers, many of whom were hampered more than he had been by added pounds and years. Even this spectacle could not keep him long unconscious that his

bed was unbelievably hard. He found one shoulder going numb, so he must perforce give up the show and turn flat on his back. Gradually the grunts and wheezing about him ceased as the last of the passengers attained his shelf. There was silence in the long cabin, save for an occasional sigh, or the beginnings of a snore. Rhythmic sounds penetrated from without, the creak of the tiller, the measured tread of the towing team, the slap of the water against the packet's side. Little by little, Henry was lulled into forgetfulness of his discomfort.

For five days the canalboat glided on its way through the pretty hills of the Mohawk Valley, across the rolling country north of the Finger Lakes, past lush farming lands and on to Buffalo. Here Henry secured space on a steamer bound for Detroit. The clerk at the hotel advised him to go by stage from Detroit to Chicago, and so to avoid the stormy trip of Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The Western Stage Coach Company made a daily run he was assured. Accordingly he paid eight dollars for fare, cabin and meals as far as Detroit where he disembarked and hunted up the office of the Western Stage Coach Company.

The stage road from Detroit to Chicago had borrowed its route from an old Indian trail. There had been no money for a separate survey and it wound and looped, following the branches of the various rivers. There was a famous bridge over the Calumet, six hundred rods long and built entirely of poles; cribs of poles for piers, poles for stringers, small poles and split timbers for the floor. Here the passengers alighted on the near side and walked across, to stand watching the progress of the coach which followed slowly while the whole crazy structure swung and swayed under the trampling of the horses' feet. Much of the way led through forest with only an occasional clearing here and there. It was sinister going and the uneasiness of the passengers was not allayed by observing a strained watchfulness on the part of the driver. There was need for vigilance, for at the point where the road came out on the Michigan shore, a gang of robbers made their headquarters. If Henry's trip to Chicago

was uneventful, it had not been for lack of adventurous possibilities.

In Chicago a surprise awaited him. The bubble of mad land speculation of 1836 and 1837 had burst, and the town, in spite of its brand new city charter, its five hundred foot piers extending into the lake north and south of the river mouth, its situation at the middle gateway of traffic from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf, was stagnant and seemingly dead. Thousands of acres pegged out in city lots on the surrounding prairie still remained, mute witnesses to the activity that had been. To be sure, the Hoosier wagons bringing produce from Indiana still rumbled down the streets, but their trade was already allotted to a hungry tribe of local merchants. Henry found them singularly picturesque, these great wains with bodies shaped like boats and painted blue, with red wheels and canvas covers stretching over high bows, drawn by eight or ten yoke of oxen, or six or eight span of horses. An apple or peach on a prong or string suspended from the front bow, advertised the load within, and the lanky uncouth drivers walked beside, armed with long whips which in town were more needed to keep off the boys than to urge on the team. They usually camped on the lake shore, drivers and wagons, and their fires shone like jewels in the dusk. Henry thought they must have come from a land of plenty with those wagonloads of fruit.

His father's friends assured him that Chicago in 1837 would offer no suitable opening for him, especially as he had in mind the idea of being a merchant like William T. But there were places near by not so hard hit by the slumping of the boom. There was the country from which the Hoosier wagons came, for instance. They advised Henry to keep his eyes open, to look around a bit. But in the end it was not Indiana, but central Illinois which gave him his opportunity. Somehow he heard of Woodburn, midway between Alton and Carlinville on the stage road which connected Springfield, the new capital of the state, with the Mississippi River. Here, in the opinion of his Chicago advisers, was an advantageous place for a "mercan-

tile enterprise." Capital was needed which Henry could secure upon application to his father, a loan to be repaid from the proceeds of the enterprise, of course. As to a knowledge of "mercantile enterprises," had he not watched the clerks in William T.'s store on Merchant's Row?

He could reach Woodburn by the St. Louis coach, which, he was told, ran day and night, having relay stations every twelve or fifteen miles where fresh horses were obtained. Henry thought this sounded like the Red Bird in which he had set out, but he soon found that the similarity ended with the words of the description. "Run" was a term that only an optimist would apply to the progress of the western stagecoach. The highway had been opened to stages four years earlier, but it was still so rough that an English traveler who went over it in 1838 could write: "The driver frequently had to call to the passengers in the stage to lean out of the carriage, first on one side, then on the other, to prevent it from upsetting in the deep ruts with which the road abounds. 'Now, gentlemen, to the right!' upon which the passengers stretched their bodies half way out of the carriage to balance that side. 'Now, gentlemen, to the left!' and so on."

After a morning of ceaseless activity there was a pause of an hour for dinner. As no one could tell just when the coach might arrive, all the preparation of the meal must be left until the horn was heard, and frequently fifty minutes of the allotted time was expended in waiting. Henry would lean against the doorpost where he might keep his attention on the progress of the cooking and still draw a breath of air. From this vantage point he could watch the great jugs of buttermilk and the plates of biscuits being set on the long table and yet he need not be overpowered by the inevitable odor of frying pork and venison. Outside in the yard a huge pile of manure loomed between the tavern and its stable, and from this pile to the stove and table drifted a cloud of flies. Sometimes the innkeeper's wife was oblivious to them, sometimes she had a homely invention to keep them from lighting on the food. One woman

had swung a cord along the ceiling over the full length of the table, and to this had attached long strips of papers which she kept in constant motion from her position at the stove. When the passengers were finally summoned, ten minutes was often all that was left of the noon hour in which to eat, but to Henry usually it was ample for all he cared to consume.

During the long afternoon, he would find himself wondering how it would be possible to endure this travel at a less favorable time of year, when the heat and dust of summer, or the cold and mud of winter and spring must be added to the muscle-wracking exertion. The nights were a prolonged torture, when Henry was glad of a broken harness strap or other minor accident, which might hold the coach at one of the relay taverns for a few hours, even though the accommodations might be simple in the extreme. Privacy was impossible and cleanliness frequently an unknown art, beds were without sheets or equipped with such dirty ones that Henry felt he could dispense with them, and sometimes the bugs were so plentiful that he found the call to return to the stage a distinct reprieve. But if the entertainment was primitive, the bills rendered could not justly be cause for complaint. "Supper, 6¢," read a typical one, "lodging 6¢, breakfast 6¢, cider 3¢, total 21¢." If this was an earnest of what he might expect in Central Illinois, living expenses would not be high.

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There was much about Woodburn which would attract a boy from New England with eyes wearied by what must have seemed the level monotony of prairie about Chicago. Land here was rolling, and the village being on the edge of Wood River, was shaded by fine trees. The houses, mostly one story in height and clapboarded, were clustered around a square or strung along the outgoing roads in dwindling lines. The stage from Springfield came in from the north, skirted the square to midway of its western side, where it halted for a change of horses at the tavern before leaving by the Alton road. Beside the tavern ran the road from Shipman to Bunker

Hill, not so wide as the route taken by the stage, and in prolonged wet weather passable only upon horseback. There was a sawmill near the river, and across the square, was a small schoolhouse, which was used also as a church, but the center of the weekday activity of the place was the tavern. Here Henry found that he could board for a dollar fifty a week.

In the southeast corner of its two story frame building he opened his store. It was a very modest relative of the shop on Merchant's Row, with a small line of goods, possibly an inappropriate line at first, though as the days lengthened into years, Henry learned from experience what he must carry. The shelves against the wall came to hold a few assorted patterns of alpaca and calico for dresses, and chambray and gingham in smaller quantities for sunbonnets and aprons. The Woodburn housewives taught him that eight yards made a "pattern" for a dress, that he must throw in a spool of thread and a card of hooks and eyes with each dress pattern, and that a sheet of cardboard for stiffening a sunbonnet brim must accompany each yard and a half of chambray. On a low shelf near at hand he kept the sets of blue and white dishes with a price mark of twenty-five cents leaning against a cup and saucer in the front rank, and in a higher and less accessible position, the more expensive "white granite" china, with the glass salt dishes and Japanned tin pepper-pots which were all that Woodburn required for the garnishing of its tables. Three boxes containing steel knives, three-tined steel forks, and tin and iron spoons stood on the counter, and iron kettles, saucepans, and "spiders," as the women called their frying-pans, hung side by side with brooms and boots from the hooks in the ceiling.

The boots had a history. They were bought from young Hank Burton who had just come from Connecticut to join his brother Jim in taking up land in Bunker Hill. Fine calfskin boots they were, a whole case full, straight from the East. Henry sold them at six dollars a pair, and could truthfully assure all purchasers that they

were the first fine boots to find their way into southern Macoupin County.

A country store is a fine observation post for one who would know his neighbors and Henry Page soon grew familiar with the various elements of his new community. There were still a few of the old wood rangers who had first penetrated these creek bottoms swarming with game, who had settled on the land, but still retained the picturesque dress and the cautious gait of early hunting days. Such a one was old man Davis who frequently came to the store in deerskin hunting shirt belted at the waist, a powder horn slung on a thong over his shoulder, a bullet-pouch of spotted fawn skin at his side, and his long flintlock rifle his inseparable companion. He had a farm southeast of town which he had taken up in 1834 and which he worked with his son Benjamin, but in the evenings he tracked the woods with his rifle on his shoulder. They were famous shots, those old ex-hunters, and could read tracks like a book. Old man Davis told Henry Page it was easy to tell from a track whether a deer was fat or lean; for if it was fat, the hind part of the foot made the heaviest impression, while if it was lean the front of the imprint was deepest. He added that it was just as well to notice a thing like that before a man started a long chase. And there was Dad Armstrong who ran the wagon-shop. He was not only a hunter himself in his off hours, but he had young men out scouring the prairies for him, as he supplied the Planter's House in St. Louis with game. Each day the prairie chickens and quail were placed on top of the south-bound stage and were delivered at the hotel in the city the next morning. Dad Armstrong once remarked in Henry's hearing that there were prairie chickens enough in the state of Illinois to pay off the whole state debt by a tax of five cents apiece, although the debt was then very large.

There were the itinerant preachers of the old days, strange uncouth men of intense convictions and wild ways, like the Reverend Patton Walker who walked through the country staff in hand, with long hair and a gray beard, with a lean weather-beaten face

and piercing eyes, who reminded Henry Page of pictures of the prophet Elijah. He would stalk into the store and offer to "rastle" with any one there and declare he could throw a man for a quarter. Or he would exhibit with pride his third full set of teeth which his neighbors would testify he had acquired in his old age. It was a fiery doctrine these old men preached, full of threatenings and fierce punishments, and some like Father Redman were famous for the volume of sound in their denunciations. Shouting Methodists they were called, and the description was an apt one.

The largest element in the community were the people on the farms. They varied in ambition and attainments from the Keas family who lived with complete satisfaction in a two-room log cabin, to the Ellett brothers who had a large place from which they sent a colored boy mounted on an Indian pony into Woodburn once a week for their mail. They were intent on making something of themselves, Alf with the farm, Ed studying to be a doctor, and Charles setting his thought on being an engineer. It was this same Charles who later directed the building of the first suspension bridge across the Niagara River, and when the first planks were laid for construction purposes, making a roadway eight or ten feet wide, he drove a span of horses over this narrow footway, two hundred feet above the water. Daring lads were all of these Ellett boys, and Ed in particular was handsome and tall, with black hair and fine blue eyes. He was drawn to the young New England storekeeper, and spent long hours perched on his counter, talking of many things beyond the confines of their circumscribed life.

After hours Henry found himself one of a strangely assorted family. The tavern was kept by a big red-faced man named Allard, who had married a frail little widow with a small daughter. This stepchild, Henrietta Wilbur, and her two little half-sisters were the children of the group. There were several young men of Henry's age, Hank Burton and his brother, Henry Tappan, and one or three more, who had employment about the village. Mrs. Allard mothered them all, mending their clothes, cooking favorite dishes, and taking

the boys under her wing equally with her three girls. The boys called her Mother Allard and warmly returned her affection.

From the vantage ground of the tavern it was an easy matter to enter the social life of the village, and Henry's natural friendliness soon won for him a place, in spite of the handicap of his Eastern training. Days were full and slipped by quickly. Months lengthened into years. And then one Fall a match hunt was held which had far-reaching consequences for Henry Page at least. Hank Burton explained that a paper would be drawn up and taken from house to house for those to sign who wished to take part, and then a day would be set for a meeting to elect captains. The captains would draw straws to determine which should have first choice of the hunters to make up his team, sides would be selected and the rules made governing the number of points to be counted for each kind of game. Every man would be expected to keep his own count with absolute honesty, but in case of suspicion he would have to produce his slain game, and any fraud, such as trying to pass off a tame turkey's head for a wild one, or claiming a deer found hanging in the woods, would be enough to disgrace a man forever. All the boys from the tavern entered their names and met at the schoolhouse at dawn on the appointed day. The hunt began at six in the morning and ended at six at night, when the hunters were to return to the school that the count of the two sides might be made up; and when the decision had been given, the losing team, for penalty, would have to provide from their spoils a game supper for all the crowd.

Red was streaking the east, when the clock struck six and the men scattered to try their separate luck. Henry made for the bottom of Wood River, determined to follow the stream. It was not difficult to get large bags of game, for the prairies and the timber along the creeks teemed with life. There were deer in herds, quail, wild turkey and prairie chicken without number. The sandhill cranes were in large flocks, the golden plover were almost as numerous as the rabbits, and the English snipe haunted every wet place. It was a hunter's paradise, but even without the game Henry would have

enjoyed walking over the still fields a-swim with autumn haze, and threading through sunlit woods laced with the shadows of bare trees. He brought a hearty appetite as well as a heavy bag to the schoolhouse.

The women of the village had gathered to do the cooking and they had a huge fire already burning in the schoolyard. Inside the building desks had been pushed back to make place for the long tables, and here a bevy of girls were making ready to serve the crowd. They laughingly insisted that the room and the doorway be kept clear for their bustling passage, but the boys could hang about the open windows, where they leaned on the sills and gave caustic advice to the waitresses within. Henry wedged himself in between Hank Burton and Jim at a window which commanded the room. His eyes scanning the hurrying figures were suddenly brought to a standstill. A small slender girl was coming in the schoolhouse door. Her dark hair, her wide set eyes with their long lashes, her delicate color, and her oval chin, all made him think of Frances. Fascinated, he watched her moving among the tables straightening a chair here, rearranging the flowers there, with a deft touch that left beauty behind. Henry did not analyze the impression of her dainty individuality into a composite of well-cut clothes and grace of gesture. He merely thought that she was the only girl in all that room who might have entered the white house in Rutland and been at ease. He became absorbed in an attempt to catch the intonation of her voice, holding his breath, and he did not know that Hank and Jim had left his side until he saw them with the other hunters trooping in at the door. With a start he turned away from the window to find Mother Allard. She would know who the dark-haired, blue-eyed girl might be. And Mother Allard told him she was Mary Rider, whose father owned the big dairy farm a mile south of town.

CHAPTER II

A Gentlewoman in the West

MARY RIDER could not remember the journey from New York to Illinois, for she had been a mere baby when the family made the move, but she had heard every detail described by her elders.

It had all begun when her father's young brother John had left home, driven by the urge to find a place for himself as roomy as the family holding in the Mohawk hills. With no definite objective he had drifted West, watching, listening, comparing; and as he went he had written home to his sweetheart and to his brother Justus who had always been his closest friend. He was a keen observer, this John Rider, with an eye for contrasts and a ready pen, and it was easy to write to Justus and his wife, for he could be certain of his brother's understanding, and he had known Mary's mother, Elizabeth Harris, since the time when the young Welsh girl had first come to teach in the Litchfield school. For these two he traced descriptions of St. Louis, that new-old city, and set down a medley of impressions of the hardship and the opportunity in the recently opened land of Illinois. Without minimizing the difficulties John still saw the adventure and week by week his brother and his brother's wife read his letters with an eager interest not unmixed with longing.

Life in Litchfield, pleasant and assured though it was, seemed at times a trifle flat, in comparison with John Rider's world of strenuous endeavor. Everything was settled and mapped out, to be predicted with certainty for months and years ahead, from the routine of the successful farm to the very recreation to be expected. Once a week Justus and Elizabeth, with Elizabeth's sister Phoebe,

went down the lane to Ezra's place to dine with the older brother and his bride. Once a week Ezra and his wife came to them. Once a week the five young people went up to Utica to sing in the chorus trained by Thomas Hastings. Once a week, on Sundays after the service in the meeting-house on Jerusalem Hill, they all gathered in the old house where Elizabeth Harris had first seen Justus Rider and his five tall brothers, to break bread with Christopher, the founder of the family, and the little mother, Joanna, who quietly ruled the seven big men. It was all as orderly as the neat checkerboard fields seen from the homestead windows, as familiar as the curling smoke arising from their neighbors' fires, and seemed as permanent as the rounded hills that shut in the valley to east and west. John's letters were like that one glimpse to the south of the distant blue of higher land.

Then one day came the letter that altered the face of everything. John had found the place where he wished to settle, near Carrollton in central Illinois. He was coming home to marry the Litchfield girl who was waiting for him, and to bring her back to this frontier community. He wrote that people were flocking into the new lands every day, sod was being turned, houses were being reared, all was optimism and enthusiasm. The only handicaps would soon be overcome when sufficient traders arrived to supply the needs of the eager colonists. Here, as John saw it, was the great opportunity. If any one were to come in from the East with a well selected stock of goods, there was no limit to the fortune that might be made. He wondered if his brother would care to join him in such an enterprise. There would not be much luxury to start with, but they could grow with the town, and make of their lives what they would. The letter was full of a contagious faith in the future of that western country. Here was adventure, it said, if they desired it.

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John Rider was at home again. More than a year had passed since his return to Litchfield, and the first step on the journey west had yet to be taken. There had been long discussions of the possi-

bilities with Joanna and Christopher, and the other brothers, and John had been questioned again and again before the decision was reached. A purchaser must be found for Justus' farm. Then the stock in trade for the new venture must be planned and secured; after which they must wait until the roads were suitable for travel, and until John's baby should be old enough to stand the journey.

To Elizabeth and Phoebe and John's young wife days had never seemed so short. There was household equipment to be furbished and replenished. A complete outfit of clothing for summer and winter must be prepared, and while the tailor would make the suits for Justus and John, of course he would have to be directed. Together the girls poured over John's letters, when the men were away, to grasp the requirements of their new situation.

One morning Elizabeth was handling the material for the men's suits. It would wear well, she thought; and on the heels of this idea came another. In the end it would wear out and what then—in that far-away frontier of Illinois who would fashion the men's clothes? She sat down to consider the problem, her mind characteristically searching for some clew to mastery. John's conversation had made it clear that the family group must be prepared to be self-sufficient, and she now bravely analyzed the lengths to which self-sufficiency must go. It was not the first time that Elizabeth Rider had found herself confronted with a complex situation to subdue, nor was it the first time she had acted in a manner contrary to all the traditions of her time in meeting the challenge. She laid her plans, and with her husband's wholehearted support—a support as remarkable in its way as was the line of action it sustained—she carried them to a successful conclusion.

It is easy to imagine the gossip that must have flown about Litchfield when it was known that the little Welsh woman had left her three babies for her younger sister to look after while she gadded up to Utica to work in the shop of a professional tailor. Elizabeth had early learned to repress her feelings, and if she suffered from the gossip she made no sign, nor did she hesitate in what she had

set out to do. She worked for the tailor until she had mastered the art of cutting and fitting clothing for men and boys. Next she apprenticed herself to a milliner in order to learn to weave and shape straw bonnets, and to trim them in accordance with the fashions, and finally she studied under a physician that she might know how to care for the ailments of her family in a land where doctors would be few.

* * *

Houses and land had been sold. Stock for the trading venture had been purchased, some of it in Utica, and some even in far-away New York. Justus had ridden down to the city to make the last arrangements, taking over a week on the road to spare his horse, and he had brought back to Elizabeth as a souvenir, a tablespoon which he had ordered a silversmith to make from silver coins he had collected in Litchfield. Justus and John together had studied maps and guidebooks to work out their route. There was no road which they could follow all the way through to Illinois. Part of the journey must be made by water. They were informed that spring, when the high water covered obstacles unsurmountable later in the year, was the best season for river-travel, and that the autumn was the most favorable time for those who went by road. This meant that it would be best to start as soon as the most intense summer heat was past, in order to make the upper reaches of the Wabash before the fall rains made recently surveyed roads impassable. They could winter at the new town of Terre Haute, which had grown up around the fort established by Harrison in his campaign against Tecumseh, and could arrange there for a flatboat to take them down the river in the Spring. It sounded feasible enough, even with little children to consider, and it was with high spirits that they set out early in September of 1822.

It was quite a cavalcade that swung out of the Rider yard and took the road down Jerusalem Hill, with the coach and the four finest of the Rider horses in the lead, two wagons with furniture and stock for the new store behind, and Justus and John on horseback,

now in front, now in the rear, now flanking the coach. In the carriage rode the three women, Elizabeth, Phoebe and John's wife, and the four children, William, Sarah, Mary, and John's baby. It is easy to imagine how excited they all were, and how tired the little people became before the day was half over. The women watched the landmarks of the familiar road, the store, the stone school, the houses with old neighbors waving from windows and yards.

The Genesee Turnpike was an old, old road, worn by the feet of the Iroquois on their way to the Lakes before the white men came to widen and improve it. It followed the most direct low levels so faithfully that it was being used almost without variation for the route of the new Erie Canal. Fine stages traveled between the towns, good inns served the public, and it was possible for the Riders to measure off the miles rapidly, being sure of adequate rest at night. They made the most of the favorable conditions which they could not expect to find beyond Buffalo where the Genesee Pike ended, and the Western Reserve Pike, suggestive of the wilderness by its very name, took its place.

Their new road followed the southern shore of Lake Erie, sometimes actually on the beach, and they watched with wonder the gray waters flecked with white by the autumn wind, stretching away to the sky. Where streams came down and emptied into the lake, they found floating bridges of loose planks resting on stringers which lay on the top of the water. At the first one of these, they looked for the wheel-tracks which would show that it could be used, and tried it gingerly. The horses' forefeet forced the flooring six inches below the surface of the water, the weight of their hindquarters added another half foot of depth, while the rear wheel of the coach was under nearly to the hub. As soon as the coach had passed over them, the loose planks bobbed up to the surface of the water and floated off downstream, so that it was necessary when the carriage was safely ashore for the horsemen to swim out, capture the moving flooring and readjust it before the wagons could follow. In

other places there were no bridges and they must go up- or down-stream searching for the ford.

Their progress had to be slow, for often the distance between stopping places was so great that they were obliged to lie over for a day or two to rest their exhausted teams. In a few large towns they found taverns, which afforded a certain rough comfort; between these they were dependent on the one-room cabins, or had no shelter at all save their coach and wagons. When a strong wind blew, their road was subject to overflow from the mounting surf of the lake, which caused further delays as the autumn gales began. But slowly, surely, they crawled on.

At Perrysburg they crossed the Maumee and learned that their road was now the Maumee Pike, and that the famous Black Swamp lay before them. This was a region of dreadful mudholes, where every team must expect to stall and, if alone, be obliged to wait until help could be secured. Help was always forthcoming, for the inhabitants made a fair living from the business of extricating travelers. At the taverns they heard great tales of these mudholes and the people who felt that they owned them. They were told of a tavern-keeper who, upon leaving the country, actually sold his right to a nearby mudhole for a goodly sum. They were assured that there was, along their road, a master who kept his boy busy all day hauling strangers out of his hole, and equally busy all night hauling enough water into it to keep the mud of such a consistency that it would be lucrative. These narratives set forth a prospect that was far from reassuring and they found the reality quite as harrowing as their expectations, for the storms of November were upon them. Not the most ardent traveler of them all had any desire to go farther when Terre Haute was finally reached.

* * *

Terre Haute in 1822 was just five years old. Fort Harrison built in 1811 for the Indian War, stood a few yards from the river and above the mark of the spring-time flood, with the cabins of the frontier settlement strung along either side of the road leading

from the fort to Old Vincennes. Almost all the population of the place was connected in some way with the flatboat trade. There were those who kept lodging houses for travelers, those who ran equipment stores, the carpenters who were often also river pilots, and the men who made up the crews. These river boatmen were a picturesque lot, tall, thin, and sinewy, in red flannel shirts tucked into brown linsey-woolsey trousers belted with a leather belt from which swung a hunting-knife balanced by a pouch, with moccasins on their feet, and fur caps, sometimes with the tail attached, on their heads. On wintry days they wore short blue coats which reached only to the hips, and they might be found gathered in knots on the sunny side of the principal store. There was a racy flavor to their talk of the river. A boatman would declare that something had happened "quicker nor a alligator can chaw a puppy" while he stood there, "as dumb as a dead nigger in a mud-hole." Another might declare that to have prevented the catastrophe would have been "harder nor climbin' a peeled saplin' heels uppard." Usually they were indifferent to the onlookers who might gather about them, but occasionally they seemed to resent this intrusion on their circle. Then one of them would advise the curious travelers to "start their trotters," and if this cryptic command failed of its effect, he might elucidate with the phrase, "Move, now; travel like a nigger in a thunderstorm."

Before the Riders, unused to the weather signs of the new locality, would have said that winter was relaxing its grip, the flatboat carpenters began work on their arks. Eighty foot poplars were cut and dragged to the shore to be used as gunwales, oak logs were pruned and squared. The hull of the Riders' craft was sixty feet long by eighteen or twenty wide, with sides about four feet high. Oak uprights for the frame of the cabin extended four or five feet above the hull, and the whole was planked like a house, but with timbers eight or ten inches thick. When Justus asked the reason for the very heavy build, he was told that his boat must be impervious to rifle fire, for the whole riverway was infested with pirates. He

thought the completed flatboat certainly resembled a fort with its barricaded entrance, its loopholes, the heavy shutters on its few windows and its trapdoor for escape when the proper way should be blocked. Within, the arrangements were rough but not entirely without comfort. In the bow was a large compartment where they were to eat, furnished with a table, chairs, and a looking glass; adjoining this was a kitchen with a stove whose pipe was carried up through the roof. A narrow passage down the center of the boat led to the parlor with four bedrooms opening from it. Then came the bulkhead which partitioned off the part where the furniture, boxes, trunks and provisions were to be stowed. On an after deck was space for the coach and the wagons, and a railed-in pen for the horses. To be sure, the walls of the family rooms were of calico, but what they lacked in substance they made up in gayety. The flat top of the cabin was the family's deck, and here Justus and John ordered a railed pen to be made, a bit smaller than that constructed aft for the cattle, that the children might have a safe place to play. By the first of March the boat was ready and all talk was of the state of the river, reports coming in constantly from upstream. The Wabash here was normally two hundred yards wide, and when the freshet began, a goodly volume of water might be expected. The loading of the boats was a community affair. Men and women worked, the men carrying aboard the goods which certain of the women wrapped, while others helped with the stowing or c ed the meals over fires kindled on the bank. A barrel of whisky with a gourd dipper near at hand stood on a wooden horse at a central spot, and the bustle may have slackened as the day grew old, but the gayety undoubtedly increased.

At last the time came when all the furniture had been carried aboard the Riders' boat, even to the bureau and the small chest which Elizabeth's mother had brought with her from Wales, the horses had been led into their pen and tied, the family was gathered on the deck, and the mounting yellow flood lifted the heavy craft, stirred it, the boatman in the bow seized the end of the long sixty

foot sweep, with which he controlled the rudder in the stern, and they were off.

The three men of the crew had laid aside their winter lethargy. As the cumbersome craft sidled out into the current they coaxed and wheedled its bow downstream. The Riders soon learned that these men were thoroughly familiar with the vagaries of the river, and fertile in devices for the tight places. The pilot might shout: "Hell's a-snortin'!" when some crisis loomed, the crew might become "a blur of arms, legs, and profanity," but the flatboat was always extricated from the difficulty unharmed.

The plan of the Riders had been to follow the Wabash to where it joined the Ohio and to drift with the Ohio to Fort Massac where an old trail led to Kaskaskia and St. Louis. But when they came to the junction of the two rivers, they made a departure from this route which was strange indeed. They turned upstream to Evansville and the whole party was put ashore there. What could have caused them to take upon themselves the arduous task of poling their heavy flatboat against the Spring current some forty miles in order to reach the initial point of a stage road, which they had already crossed days before, nearly sixty miles nearer their destination in Illinois, is a mystery which admits of only one adequate explanation.

Had they adhered to their original plan, they would have had to pass Cave-In-Rock below Shawneetown on the Ohio, the headquarters of the most infamous band of pirates that had ever operated on the river. These robbers did more than attack limping and crippled craft as did the other gangs along the stream; they even seized moving boats which were known to be richly laden, boarding them in force at night, killing crew and passengers and sending the boat to New Orleans or some other lower Mississippi town where the cargo might safely be sold. In 1823 they were in their evil heyday, the terror of the river, strongly organized and of sufficient numbers to maintain spies in all the important upstream stopping-places of the flatboat trade, to report on the movements

of such boats as had valuable cargoes. Although the identity of various members of the gang was known or suspected by most of the inhabitants of the river towns, they went about their business unmolested, protected by the fear their bad name inspired.

The stage route from Evansville through Vincennes had just been opened that spring, and it crossed the Wabash at Vincennes. Between Vincennes and the Ohio there was another stopping-place of the flatboats at Mt. Carmel. If, at this place, the Riders' boatmen had recognized a spy of the Cave-In-Rock pirates, they would justly have feared for their craft. Not many flatboats carried three full teams of fine horses, a coach and wagons in addition to a load of goods and household furniture. When to this lure was added the fact that a group of passengers so largely made up of women and children would be peculiarly easy to overpower, it was impossible to believe that no word would be sent to the main gang. The boatmen probably carried their fears to Justus and John, who must plan some method of escape. To return to the stageroad at Vincennes would be to contend with the high water of a comparatively narrow stream, and they might be seen reversing their direction by the robber-spy and be overtaken before they could reach safety. If, however, they continued down to the Ohio and there turned up to the beginning of the Vincennes road at Evansville, they might give their pursuers the slip, and would have the advantage of the shore eddies of the larger stream to help them on their way. Whatever the explanation, this was the maneuver they actually executed. At Evansville they parted with their boatmen, paying them about two hundred dollars for the boat, beside the wages of the three men for the days spent on the river. And for all the outlay they were further from Illinois than they had been at Terre Haute. It must have been a discouraged group that climbed into the family stage.

It was fifty-six miles back to Vincennes and there was only one town on the road, Princeton, the midway point. The road was much used and in summer was said to be good, but the Riders were going

over it in the wettest time of the spring, when the quicksands in the barrens were dangers to be reckoned with. They grew to hate the "Slashes," those stretches of flat clay land that held the water when other soil was long since dry, and where their horses slid and struggled for a footing.

At Vincennes they would strike "The National Road," and even though it was a section newly opened, they hoped for better going. They might have known what to expect if they had seen the surveyor's instructions which read: "All trees of one foot in diameter (at one foot from the ground) and under, to be cut level with the surface; all up to eighteen inches in diameter, to be cut not exceeding nine inches from the surface; and all trees over eighteen inches in diameter, to be cut not exceeding fifteen inches from the surface; and all said stumps within the said center of thirty feet must be rounded and trimmed in such a manner as to present no serious obstacles to carriages." When the stumps had been so trimmed, the "road" was open for traffic.

The streams through Illinois that spring were unusually high and the fords were so dangerously deep that coach and wagons must be unloaded to make the crossings. After the belt of timber by the Wabash had been left behind there was no wood to make rafts, so that the goods and furniture must be packed across by the horses, and the men and women must wade the icy streams, carrying the children.

There were, however, farmhouses and taverns along the road, at intervals varying from four to twelve miles, and the Riders could stop when they felt it was necessary. Long stages were not added to the other discomforts, and every mile put further behind them the robbers of Cave-In-Rock.

At Illinois Town they could look across the Mississippi to the spires and roofs of St. Louis, but they probably did not cross the ferry even for a short rest there. In spite of the sixty-five more miles of the newest and therefore presumably the worst road that they

had yet traveled over, they reached Carrollton before the month of April had given place to May.

The coach lurched to a standstill at last. As the tired women with their fretful babies in their arms looked through the windows their eyes rested on a sight that was now familiar. Perhaps the central open space of the little town was a trifle more generous than some that they had seen, for Carrollton had been laid out as the county seat. On the west side stood the frame courthouse, unattractive, two-storied, presenting a high gaunt end to the front and already looking dingy and weatherbeaten, a fit companion to the log jail which flanked it. Diagonally across on the north side was the other frame structure in the place, a two-storied house with a portico. In the middle of the grass enclosure between the square's four roads were the public well and the whipping post. For the rest, there was the usual inadequate fringe of low log buildings. There was nothing to distinguish this from hundreds of other raw little towns they had been through—nothing until John rode up level with the coach window to ask them what they thought of their new home. They leaned out then, all eager curiosity, realizing with a flood of relief that their long journey was over.

* * *

All this Mary had heard many times from her elders, but her own first memories were of the two brick houses set side by side with a stretch of land about them, of the gardens behind and the orchard between them. Her uncle John was dead but his young widow lived there beyond the apple trees and the little cousin Evelyn came across to play. Every morning Mary's father rode down to the store on the square and the little girl would stand at the window with a beating heart to watch the horse prance and rear and then dash down the drive to the gate. Her brother William had a horse, too, but the child thought that no one could ride as Justus did. When her mother and her Aunt Phoebe wanted to go anywhere they had the carriage for their use, and the driving-team with cropped manes and tails and glossy coats. If Mary was allowed

to go with them she would sit between the grown-ups, her little hands folded in her lap, her whole small being exulting in the luxury of soft cushions and easy motion. If she was left behind she might go to the barn where the family coach with its great C-springs still stood, and with Sarah and sometimes William too, she might play that they were driving from New York to Illinois, with the younger children for fellow travelers. The coach was to the child the proof that the tale of adventure was true.

Inside the house, in the room that Mary shared with Sarah, was another link with the past, a past that in this case reached back beyond everything her babyhood had experienced. The little bureau from Wales where the sisters kept their clothes in orderly piles was a constant spur to the child's imagination. She had been told that her grandmother, Sarah Price, for whom her sister Sarah was named, had brought it from Radnor to Pembroke when she came there as the bride of James Harris, Mary's grandfather. That was the bureau's first journey, from Radnor to Pembroke in Wales, and Mary rolled the names on her tongue and tried to picture the towns, the country for which they stood. But when she questioned her mother, she found little satisfaction, for Elizabeth's memories of Wales were fragmentary. Of the house where she was born she had little to say, save that James Harris, a clergyman who had received his training at one of the English universities, had many books. She remembered these books and an atmosphere of beauty, but the details of the picture were gone. There were memories of the high hedges that bordered the road, the men who doffed their caps, the women with high-crowned hats worn over showy kerchiefs who curtsied as Grandmother Harris passed by. This grandmother was a woman of influence with property enough to qualify under the Welsh law as a freeholder, so much Elizabeth knew, for her most vivid memory was of a rainy afternoon when a candidate for Parliament called to request her grandmother's vote. A dash of rain against the window always brought back the picture in after life, and for her little daughter, Elizabeth reconstructed the scene. She

described herself sitting on the windowseat, struggling with four sticky and refractory needles with which she must knit ten rounds on her stocking. The long room with the dark paneling on its walls, the fireplace where the rain falling down the chimney throat softly spat on the glowing coals, the three windows with the rain-blurred panes, were the background for her grandmother's figure in the armchair, a tall woman, made taller still by her towering cap. Mrs. Harris, Elizabeth explained to the child, looked with disfavor on the changing fashions of the Regency, holding that their suggestions of the actual female figure were signs of that unrestraint which had brought France to ruin, and she not only wore full skirts and crossed kerchief herself, but she dressed her granddaughters in voluminous defiance of a licentious age. Even the baby Phoebe, staggering from chair to chair that rainy afternoon, struggled with a multiplicity of skirts that made her little figure as wide as it was long. Then a servant had opened the door to announce the caller, and, little as she was, Elizabeth said she had noticed with pride the look of respect in the would-be member's eyes as he bowed to her grandmother. That was all the picture, but it was enough for Mary. As she drew the smooth drawers of the little Welsh bureau in and out to find or replace her clothes she would sometimes stand dreaming, thinking she could see the tall old woman in the armchair across the sea.

It was not strange that Mary's mother should remember so little of Wales, for she was not yet seven years old when her father decided to move his family to America, and the bureau began its second journey. The way led from Pembroke to Bristol, where the New York ship lay with its towering masts; over the Atlantic in this ship that skimmed along in fair weather under a cloud-like mass of sail, or cowered and wallowed before the gray fury of storms; then beating up the Hudson for days in a sloop, to reach Albany, and at last overland to Remsen, some twenty miles north of Utica where the Welsh quarrymen had settled and where James Harris was now to preach. As Elizabeth had remarked, it was a long hard

journey for little children, to say nothing of the frail mother. But this was how the bureau had been brought to New York.

* * *

Justus Rider kept open house and scarcely a day went by that he did not bring home some road-worn man, a missionary or a preacher on his long circuit, a writer, perhaps, studying the new West, or a statesman heroically mending these distant fences. All were welcome, all found the refreshment of good food, good beds and stimulating talk, and some came not once but many times. The children had their favorites among these visitors for reasons of their own. James, for instance, the brother just younger than Mary, watched eagerly for the coming of Edward Beecher, for when Mr. Beecher alighted at the door, he would usually lift the little boy into his saddle, place his feet in the loops of the stirrup leathers and give him the reins. Then James might ride old Jim down to the gate and back before heading him toward the barn. Old Jim's progress was sedate at its best, and at the end of a long day on Illinois roads not even a small boy's surreptitious kicking could urge him beyond a walk. But he was tall if he was not fiery, and the creaking of the saddle and the rattle of the bit were music to James.

When J. M. Peck came riding up the drive the children could not outdo the older Riders in their delighted welcome. In this the family were not alone, for the talented Baptist missionary, in his coming and going, kept the isolated settlers in touch with one another, and had won the affectionate title of "Father" from many who were not of his form of faith. He knew every inch of the new lands, and was frequently called on to make a map or to assist in laying out a road. He knew all the people on the frontier farms, and was often made a counselor in strange predicaments, or a judge of bizarre disputes. His experience was amazingly varied, and he could relate it with tolerance compounded with understanding and spiced with humor. Old and young hung entranced on his words, and where the elders relished the keenness of observation and mental grasp, the children reveled in the vivid pictures he drew

for them. He was like a bracing breeze that cleared the air, and it was always with real regret that they all gathered to see him mount and ride away, and to wave their farewells until the trees hid his figure from view.

At such times Justus would draw his tiny wife to his side and say with a bantering smile: "Betsey, I fear you have been 'harboring' again," and all the grown people would laugh. It was not until Mary herself was grown that she knew the point of this joke. Then she learned that when Elizabeth and Phoebe had first come to Carrollton they had joined the only organization of Baptists in the town, a group which held the extremely narrow tenets of that wing sometimes called "Hard Shell." Evidently the two daughters of University-trained James Harris attempted to introduce new ideas which roused the suspicion of their fellow worshipers, and then for a crowning crime they had entertained Father Peck, whose broad-mindedness made him anathema to the strict "Hard Shell" sect. The brethren's indignation took a drastic form, which was thus embodied in their church minutes: "Resolved, that Mrs. Justus Rider and Miss Phoebe Harris be expelled from the Baptist church, because they favor Sunday Schools which are not mentioned in the Bible, and have harbored a missionary." As a result of this summary dismissal, the year that Mary was six years old, six people had met in Justus Rider's house and organized a Baptist church in which men like Father Peck could find a place, and the reprehensible missionary was "harbored" whenever he could be persuaded to accept hospitality; the little Riders all went dutifully to Sunday School, and William was given an incentive to his study in the promise that when he was old enough he should go to Shurtleff, Father Peck's new college at Alton on the Mississippi.

* * *

Mary was eleven years old when the cholera first visited Carrollton, and almost every house in town had its sick and dying. The older Riders were acting as nurses and there was more work than all the doctors in Greene County could do, yet one physician re-

fused to leave his house. Mary long remembered her father's anger when this news was brought to him. He saddled his horse and rode away, to return in a short time with the doctor's saddle-bags which he carried into the kitchen. While Aunt Phoebe emptied and cleaned the bottles he told how the terrified man had lowered the bags from a second story window in response to the demand that this much be done to save the lives of his neighbors. The cleansed bottles were all filled with cholera medicine, compounded according to the prescription of the family doctor, and with the bags thus replenished, and with explicit directions for treatment, Mary's father set out on his rounds.

As the epidemic spread it was impossible even by traveling night and day to care for the sick, scattered as they were. Coming upon a large house where two old people had been deserted by their panic-stricken children, Justus saw a chance to improvise a hospital. With the help of a friend he cleared the unnecessary furniture from the rooms, carried in beds from nearby deserted houses, and set up his receiving ward. A farm-wagon filled with straw was the ambulance and with this he gathered in the cholera victims from the outlying farms, carrying men and women from their houses to the bed of his waiting wagon. At the "hospital" fifteen year old William was in charge, timing the doses which his father set out, and going from bed to bed with water.

As the death list grew, there were numbers of orphaned children among the sick, and for these another house was cleared and little Sarah was trained to give the medicine, with her small brother James for first assistant and water-carrier. Mary's part was in helping her Aunt Phoebe who was superintending the cooking for the sick and their nurses, and all day long the child trudged back and forth with bowls of broth and empty dishes, having occasional glimpses of William and Sarah in their wards, of her mother hurrying from house to house, or her father riding into town with a sick child in his arms.

And when the whole experience was over it was this last picture

that was stamped the deepest on Mary's memory, her big strong father, holding down his spirited horse to a gentle gait that would be easiest for the little one he held so carefully.

* * *

Mary was going to her first ball. The winter of 1836 and 1837 had been a gay one for the two girls, a veritable triumph in a small way, for Sarah's wit and Mary's beauty made an irresistible combination. There were parties not only in Carrollton but in Alton, where William had introduced them to his friends, and even in St. Louis. For a wealthy young man from the city had been captivated by little Mary and had paid her such furious court that she, thrilled and a bit carried away no doubt by all he could give her, had succumbed, and Justus and Elizabeth had reluctantly permitted her engagement. Under these circumstances there had been an exchange of visits, and now had come an invitation to Mary to be present at the ball given by the family in honor of Daniel Webster who was then touring the West. She was to act as the daughter of the house and to open the dancing with the guest of honor as her partner. It was small wonder that she sang to herself as she embroidered the flounces for the dress she would wear, or that she thought herself lucky beyond her bravest dreams.

Although her first ball was impressive even to the newspaper writers accustomed to the dazzling social affairs of gay St. Louis, the sixteen year old girl from Carrollton had never been out of place. The great man had found the dainty child a charming companion, with the appealing way she had of lifting her fine eyes shyly to meet his own, and with the quaintness of the old world manners she had learned from Aunt Phoebe. He was delighted with her, and expressed his delight in courtly phrase before he relinquished her to the swarming circle of younger men who crowded about her to claim the less ceremonious dances.

Webster's itinerary was to have taken him to Alton and Carrollton, but a few days after the dance in St. Louis he was called back

VIEW IN SALT LAKE CITY, SHOWING BRIGHAM YOUNG'S RESIDENCE ON THE RIGHT

(*From an old print*)

A TYPICAL ENCAMPMENT OF THE TRAIL: THE WAGON FORMATION IS FOR PROTECTION FROM INDIANS

(*From an old print*)

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FREE LIBRARY
SAN JOSE, CALIF.

to Washington by the troubles arising from the financial panic of 1837. The previous ten years had seen a rising tide of speculation in land throughout the West. With the sudden influx of population and the rapid growth of new communities, large returns could legitimately be expected from investments wisely placed; but, as in every land-boom, hopes cleverly capitalized soon passed beyond the bounds represented by any real increase in value. Federal Government funds placed in the hands of the state officials by the Act of June 1836, which divided a Treasury surplus among the various states, were used in wild speculation, not often through fraud, but usually because the men entrusted with them were unused to financial responsibility and knew of no better investment than the one favored by popular vote, and practically all the banks were committed to the course. In the smaller communities, like Carrollton, where there were no banks, the firmly established merchants were acting in that capacity, receiving money for investment, handling mortgages and loans.

In the summer of 1836, the government had begun demanding specie payment for the purchase of public lands, hoping by this means to check the madness of the speculation in the West where specie was scarce and where most of the purchases were being made. The results, however, were far beyond anything the originators of the scheme had planned. Financial houses everywhere felt the strain of the sudden demand for coin and were obliged to put drastic limitations on all their activities. Eastern banks with western connections called in their western loans, and so forced the western banks to refuse the paper of the local merchants. It took nearly a year for the full effect to be felt, but in May of 1837 the banks all over the country suspended payments and a few weeks later, the Treasury, sharing in the general distress, followed suit. The merchants left with useless paper on their hands were hopelessly involved, and many of them like the firm of Rider and Caverly went down before the storm.

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To Mary the last days in Carrollton were always a nightmare memory. From one day to the next her father had aged, fighting his losing battle to save the funds placed with his firm to invest, which he regarded as so many personal trusts. The very foundations of his self-confidence seemed shaken by the fact that he had followed his best judgment in coming to this disaster, and the loyalty of his family whom he felt he had wronged but added to his self-reproach. When the store finally closed its doors, although he was not yet fifty in years, in spirit he was an old and broken man.

The waves of trouble which Justus had been holding back rolled over and engulfed them. House and land, horses and carriages were swept away, and all but the bare necessities of household furniture were put up at auction for the debts of the firm. When the hideous sale was over, the auctioneer's officers entered the familiar rooms and carried off the desks and chairs, the silver tableware, the feather-beds and even the beloved books.

Nor was the loss confined to their tangible possessions. Friends whom they had trusted fell away, old associates grew cold. Mary had written to her betrothed in St. Louis, as soon as she knew the truth of her father's situation, offering to release him, and her offer had been accepted. There were protestations of course, but no amount of protestation could alter the fact, and even though her pride was hurt more than her heart, her position was not easy, and it was well that there was urgent work to take up her mind.

The family was moving from Carrollton. An avenue of escape had been opened to them, not by a Carrollton neighbor, but by a friend from whom they had never expected help, Doctor Edwards of Edwardsville. The doctor was extensively interested in land around Woodburn, a little town on the St. Louis-Springfield stage-road. With the difficulties involving all land transactions at the time, he needed a man in this town to look after his affairs. He offered this post of manager to Justus, and to William a place in his bank in Edwardsville. The bustle of preparation for the change was a relief to them all, but their deepest trouble still lay ahead. One

morning little Alfred was found to be feverish and ill, and as the day wore on they knew that the cholera, which was again in town, had him in its grip. Three days and nights, in one of the dismantled rooms, Justus and Elizabeth fought for the little boy's life, but such skill as they could muster was not sufficient and on the fourth morning he died. The nightmare had come to its culmination.

* * *

Life in Woodburn was a changed and serious matter to Sarah and Mary. From being the petted daughters of the leading man in a bustling town where the cut of a dress or the success of a party were their weightiest concerns, they had fallen into this quiet backwater where the main excitement was the arrival and departure of the stage, and where the hard work for a household of nine filled the hours from dawn to dark. Some of the depredations of the auctioneer must be made good, yet at every turn money must be saved, and nothing could be bought or done outside which they might contrive themselves. The girls must take their share in the task of cutting clothes for their father and for James who grew so fast out of whatever garments were made him. If they wanted bonnets they must learn from their mother the art of braiding and shaping them for themselves. There were geese to be tended if they ever hoped for featherbeds again, and a garden to be made and weeded. There was knitting and weaving to be done as well as the endless daily round of cooking and baking, washing and cleaning.

Mary found the multiplicity of tasks appalling, and she would sometimes watch with amazement while her tall thin sister flew about the house, with quick tongue and quicker temper, bundling the younger children a bit unceremoniously out of the way. Sarah had inherited from her mother an efficiency that reveled in the new responsibility and her keen sense of humor flashed and played about the makeshifts of their meager home, saving her from any touch of self-pity. But Mary on the other hand had been completely fitted for the life which had slipped from them. In her father's house

in Carrollton against the background of wealth and ease the loveliness and gentleness of the Victorian ideals which ruled her were at their best. Strength and initiative were not virtues required of gentlewomen, and if she could never manage and direct a house with the skill Elizabeth had shown, she could grace one with a perfection entirely her own. In this new and hateful succession of menial tasks she was inept and almost clumsy. It was unthinkable that she should shirk, but no amount of struggling could make her efficient, and when Sarah amused by the resultant fumbling found use for that sharp wit of hers, Mary could only turn away with tearful eyes. The fragility which had been an appealing part of her charm now was her undoing. The work wore on her until she became subject to the nervous headaches and neuralgia from which she never afterwards completely escaped.

She lived for the rare occasions when Elizabeth sent the two girls to stay over Sunday with William in Edwardsville. Then she and Sarah would take their old party dresses from the lowest drawer of the little Welsh bureau, and turning them inside out would stitch and freshen until even they were satisfied with the result. Thus fortified, they could draw mitts over work-reddened hands and laugh and flirt with the zest born of long deprivation. Once more a crowd of young men gathered about Mary to dispute for the privilege of carrying her fan, and young Mr. Hays from Belleville saw her home, escorted her to church, or strolled on the shaded streets with her on Sunday afternoon, healing her wounded pride with the flattery of his admiration. But such seasons of escape were all too short. Monday morning always sent William back to his counter, and the girls to dishpan and washtub.

* * *

Mrs. Harris, the old Welsh gentlewoman pictured in Elizabeth's earliest memories with crossed kerchief and towering cap was dead, and in dying she had remembered the granddaughters whom she had not seen since their babyhood. The legacy, for those times, was a large one, and demanded serious attention. William had come

from Edwardsville, bringing with him Dr. Edwards, the family friend. Sarah and Mary sat hand in hand on the edge of the group to watch the elders decide what was to be done with the Welsh money. Elizabeth and Phoebe had already made their plan, and to all remonstrance they turned deaf ears. Indeed, Elizabeth stated with firmness that they had called the men in council merely to determine the particular means to be used to attain their end, a remark which caused Sarah to exchange a gleeful glance with Mary. The end they had in mind was to re-establish Justus in business again, and inaugurate easier times for them all. They insisted that they would withhold nothing for themselves. Justus must have it all. But here Justus somewhat huskily raised an objection. He pointed out that a part of the obligations of his old firm had not been met. If the Welsh money were given to him, his creditors might demand a new settlement and take it all away. Mary clutched Sarah's hand when William reluctantly confirmed this fear. Doctor Edwards however had a way out. He owned a tract of land a mile south of Woodburn village. There were two hundred acres suitable for dairy farming lying on either side of the road, and two miles east toward Bunker Hill there were forty acres of timber land which he could also let them have. With such capital as the Riders had to put in, this holding ought to assure a comfortable living for them all, and, as for creditors, the way to avoid them was to enter the deed in William's name. This met with complete approval, and to Justus, with his lost self-confidence, the scheme possessed the merit of involving no fortunes other than their own. Moreover it soothed his pride to have the unselfish gift of his wife and her sister go nominally to his son.

So it was that Mary and Sarah had a new incentive as they pared and cut the apples for drying, and boiled down the apple butter that fall of 1839, for with the Spring these jars would be moved to their own cellars,—they might even have a party in their own house again. On the land south of town, there were houses to be refitted, and barns and stables to be built, and every Sunday through the fall

they all walked out on the milelong road to see what progress had been made.

Life on the farm settled into a routine, punctuated for the younger children by the daily excitement of bringing in the cattle. There was always a race for the privilege of going after them, which Frances usually won. Fras ran like a young deer and not even the boys could catch her. She would take hold of a horse's mane and leap to his back from the ground and be off bareback, before a slow-moving child would know she had started. A fence was no obstacle to Fras if her mount would jump it, and she made of the prosaic duty of hunting up the cows a headlong, exhilarating rush.

For the older members of the family, however, the care of the herd and the dairy was work. Milking from thirty to seventy cows morning and night was a heavy task. Then the great cheese vats of copper required constant and scrupulous cleansing to keep them safe, and on days when the presses were working, when the old white horse Kitty was brought up from the pasture to plod her patient miles in the treadmill, there was employment for every available hand. Then the newly pressed cheeses were stored away to ripen and the round began again. When a consignment of cheeses was ripe and ready for market, the heavy wagon was rolled out of the barn and packed full, the bows were set in place and sheet drawn over, the oxen were brought up and two of the men told off from other work to drive the wagon to St. Louis and dispose of the load. Sometimes Justus went too, if it were time to buy the year's supplies, and when he returned he never failed to bring some pretty things for his daughters and his wife, nor was Aunt Phoebe ever forgotten.

Tenants came and went in the smaller house beyond the Osage Orange hedge. There was one family of five. The wife, a slack, ignorant woman, was greatly impressed by Elizabeth Rider's efficiency and her steady control of the children. She too, believed in discipline, she told Mrs. Rider, but her methods were different. Every one knew that children would be bad, no one could prevent that, but she

made it a practice when she got hers up in the morning to whip them all soundly to make them behave during the day. It was a time-saving expedient that she recommended as one harassed mother to another.

One morning when Justus was gone to St. Louis, one of the children came running up from the tenant house crying that her mother and all the folks were ill. As Elizabeth gathered her store of drugs together she drew out from the youngster that her father's brother had come from "somewhere south" a few days before, that he had been ailing when he came, and now all were down with whatever it was. This sounded ominous enough, but nothing could have prepared Elizabeth for the state of things she found. On a bed made up on the kitchen floor, one hand still clutching the blanket about his shoulders the uncle from the south lay dead. The tenant on the bed was muttering in delirium, and his wife, who had tried to rise, was lying half dressed on the floor with only strength left to indicate the room beyond where the two other children lay sick. There were dark purple spots on the woman's throat and the man's breast, and the children were burning with fever.

After her brief survey, Elizabeth returned to the fence where she halted those who had followed her, and there she organized her relief corps. Some one must go for a doctor. James she would ask to come inside the enclosure with her, for she would need the strength of his long arms. Phoebe, with Sarah and Mary to help her, must do the cooking for the two nurses and the sick, and this food and plenty of hot water must be brought to the fence and there set down. She looked from one to the other to be sure that each understood his part, then with quick step she turned back to the house, with her tall son striding by her side. At the door Mary saw her stop and reach up to tie a handkerchief over James's nose and mouth, a second white cloth the boy adjusted over his mother's face, then together they went inside, and the shadows swallowed them.

For days the doctor came and went, for days the girls carried the

food and water to the fence and there transferred them to the dishes that James set out for them. It was from James that the girls later learned the details of these days. The fever had taken its course, and one by one all died. Young James made the coffins with lumber brought to the barrier, and Elizabeth washed the dead that together they buried. Then they had cleaned and scoured the house, burning the bedding and clothing, even their own. Nor did they return home until the passage of days made it certain that they had not themselves contracted the disease, precautions which protected Woodburn from any danger of an epidemic of the spotted fever.

But if the tenants in the frame house came and went, the occupant of the log cabin across the meadow remained the same,—old Uncle York, the free negro from Tennessee. He had a little ground around his cabin that he had planted in broom-corn, and Sundays and all the spare moments of his time were spent in the manufacture of brooms. This unhallowed activity on the Sabbath day combined with the shining black of his skin to impress the children with a certain awe, which was yet mixed with fascination. They feared to approach his house too near, yet they could not keep altogether away.

In the fall of each year when the harvest was in and the pressure of farm work relaxed, Uncle York was loaned a wagon into which he loaded his brooms. Then he drove through the country, camping on the side of the road, sleeping in the wagon and selling the brooms by the way, always making south to the River and over the River and through Kentucky into Tennessee, where his slave wife and children were. Every penny that he made on the brooms, every cent that he could save from his wages was being hoarded until the time when he might buy the freedom of his family. When the year came that he had the sum which the master had named, there was no holding Uncle York. The Riders let him start out earlier than usual for they saw he could do no worth while work until his journey had been made. He returned after the usual interval alone. The price at which the woman and children were held had been raised,

and he had still more to earn. Year after year the drama was re-enacted as long as the Riders held the farm. Each fall he set out with the same high hopes that repeated thwartings never seemed to kill, only to return dejected but never utterly despairing. As the children grew older and could sense the agony of the old man's struggle, a hatred of slavery arose in each one, such as no theorizing of their elders could have instilled. When the Riders had moved from the farm, Old York made one more trip south only to find that his family had been sold "down the river" and were completely lost to him. The Riders believed that it was this final blow that caused the old man's death that winter after his return.

* * *

Old friends came by occasionally, but the neighbors held aloof until after the siege with the spotted fever. Then first the jolly English physician, Doctor Grinsted, began coming to the farm, bringing his wife to enjoy his new found friends. The two were immensely popular not only with the elders but with the young people as well. Little by little others followed this lead, overcoming the suspicion with which the newcomers had at first been regarded.

There had been certain reasons for this feeling. The Riders came from a larger town and they had brought what was considered an ambitious array of furniture. The typical farm home, Hank Burton said, contained "a kitchen table, bedsteads and bedding, a few splint-bottomed chairs, a Seth Thomas clock and mirror, a tin wash basin, soap and a towel, with a bucket and gourd dipper placed near the well." In comparison with such Spartan simplicity as this, it is hardly strange that the Riders' long mahogany sideboard caused remark. Even Elizabeth's little Welsh bureau of curled maple would appear impressive. Then, too, the Rider women and the older girls wore dainty clothes and shaped bonnets of straw when every one else was content with gingham. Perhaps a shade of envy influenced the neighbors' thoughts, but they wondered among themselves whether the newcomers might not be "stuck-up." One woman who dropped in to borrow some household necessity, and who had seen a

copy of Godey's Lady's Book lying on the table, reported that Mrs. Rider had a book full of pictures of herself and her daughters in the clothes that they used to wear in Carrollton. All this made a barrier which took time and unfailing neighborliness to overpass.

Every Sunday, the Riders had been driving in to the town to attend the meeting in the big room of the tavern, where the Baptists held their services, while the Methodists made use of the brick schoolhouse across the square. Now the girls found friendly faces, and there was some temptation to linger and talk while the teams were being brought around. From this it was a short step for Mother Allard's young men to form the habit of appearing at the farm on winter evenings to roast apples and pop corn at the fireplace in the big room. There was broad-shouldered Henry Burton, the clever young carpenter who could turn his hand to anything, there was Tom Van Dorn from the big farm on the Alton road, there was Henry Tappan whose merry face and offhand manner had won him the ironic sobriquet of "Judge," and tall Henry Page from New England, who seemed to find the appealing eyes and shy smile of Mary Rider more important than cashbook or ledger in his new store. There was much chatter and laughter, and revealing silences when visions glowed in the rosy coals and friendships ripened. Then with the coming of spring a common enterprise drew them all still closer together.

Father Peck came to Woodburn and held a meeting that packed the tavern room to the very doors, and the Baptists decided to build a church which was to be used as a joint place of worship with the Presbyterians and which speedily became a community activity. Land was secured on the northwest corner of the square and the neighbors hauled the logs to the sawmill by the river. Then stage by stage they built their church. They raised the frame of squared logs, they clapboarded the sides and shingled the roof, team working against team in competitive speed, while the women and girls prepared the food for the hungry workers. It could not be done all at once, but must be accomplished a day now and a day then, as

the pressure of farm tasks would permit, and it was midsummer before the roof was completed so that work could begin inside. Hank and Jim Burton were making a fine black walnut pulpit and others were building the pews, and even the Fourth of July celebration came almost as an interruption. A platform was erected as usual at one end of the village square for the orator of the day and the reader of the Declaration of Independence, plank seats were set up for the audience beyond the space reserved for the Woodburn band, Tom Van Dorn with his fiddle, and Hank Burton and his clarinet; but the oratory and the free dinner served under an improvised shade of boughs were not this year the culmination of the summer. The main preoccupation was the raising of the church.

The baptistry was a problem. After much deliberation it was decided that it was hardly right for one denomination to monopolize a fair portion of the front of the church for its own peculiar uses, and the baptismal font was moved into the yard. A square tank was dug beside the church, its sides shored up with planks, and steps were built at one end to lead down into the water when it should be filled. The first baptizings occurred in the fall, and to mitigate the chill of the icy water stones were heated in a bonfire for an hour or so before the ceremony and dropped into the tank. This method effectually warmed the water, but it so horrified one convert that he stoutly refused to be baptized. He did not hold with such mollycoddling, and he determined then and there to join the Campbellites and be immersed in Wood River rather than to be a party to heating baptismal water with stones.

Henry Page, these days, was doing constant sums in mental arithmetic based on the growing balance in the ledger of his "mercantile enterprise." He must pay off the debt to his father, but perhaps by spring he could tell Mary of the longing that now he could only express by lifting a heavy basket for her on one of these picnics. He sat near her whenever he could and sometimes his straying fingers touched a fold of her dress. He saw her home from church, carrying her hymnbook, steadying her progress over some unusual rut.

He longed passionately to protect her from every rough place she might ever meet, and there were times when a tenderness in Mary's smile or a quick wave of color on her half averted face filled him with a wild hope that perhaps she understood what he could not say. Not now, but in the spring. . . .

With the spring came changes that played into his hands though it may well be doubted whether he needed any reinforcement. Word came that William was to marry Corinth Dewey, the high-spirited, dark-eyed girl of Belleville who had figured in his recent letters, and that he was giving up his position in the bank to bring home his bride to the farm in Woodburn, where increasing prosperity would give plenty of work for an overseer. Justus was glad of able assistance, Elizabeth was eager to welcome back her firstborn, but space in the little house would be at a premium until another shelter could be built. If Mary married now, she could give up her bed to Teen and Fras, whose room would then be available for the newly wedded pair. She must have blushed under the amused scrutiny of her mother's eyes if she presented this excuse, but there was no denying the validity of her argument, and for this or other unspoken reasons, it was decided that she and Henry were to be married on June thirtieth 1842, immediately after the homecoming of William and Corinth.

Those were exciting days for the little house which seemed to stretch to take them all in. First the small room which Teen and Fras had shared was prepared for the newcomers, and the house was decked with flowers on the day the bride was expected. Then she had come, and in the cart with her trunks was her square piano which was carried in and set up in the big living-room. For the younger children interest in the new sister was almost swamped by the glory of this addition. They tiptoed about it, and five-year-old Richard timidly touched a key. When William would have ordered the child away, Corinth interfered and sitting on the stool she lifted the little fellow to her lap and set his chubby hands in position on the notes. It was his first music lesson and the beginning of over

eighty years of music loving. On the heels of this excitement came Mary's wedding-day.

On June thirtieth the Riders were early astir. The living-room fireplace was cleared of its ashes and banked with flowers, for the family would have to live on cold food for one day, since beauty must be served. All the morning, the young people ranged the woods and meadows for flowers and vines to decorate the big room and the porch outside. In the afternoon the table was spread to its greatest extent, built out with boards and covered with the snowiest of cloths, and here Richard saw the meat that he had helped to cook set out on platters wreathed with green leaves. The marvelous cake was in the center flanked with lesser creations that yet gave forth a distracting odor, and right in front where every one could see, Mary with a smile had placed in a bowl the bunch of daisies her little brother had brought her packed hot and tight in his little hands. With so large a share in the preparations, it was a dreadful disappointment when he and Angie were given their bowls of bread and milk as usual and turned over to Aunt Phoebe to be put to bed. He would hardly have been human if he had not cried, and two-year-old Angie, though she did not have so clear an idea of what she was missing, promptly joined the tune. It taxed even Aunt Phoebe to quiet them, but at last they settled down, and for a reward the curtain which screened their corner was left a shade apart and eyes were blind to the two little yellow heads that peeped and peered and occasionally in their excitement almost came through.

The guests began to arrive, and the ladies came to lay aside their bonnets and to give last pats to dress and hair in the room where the children crouched motionless behind their curtain. There was talk and laughter, and then a hush as the door of the room opposite opened and Mary dressed in white stepped out to take her father's arm. Mr. Davis was by the fireplace and Henry by his side, and the children saw their father lead Mary across the room. There were low solemn words, now in one voice now in another, and the accents of prayer. So Mary was married to Henry Page.

CHAPTER III

The Quarrel

IT was May of 1843. Mary sat by an open window, her hands resting idly for a moment on the soft white folds of her sewing. Her thoughts were wandering among the memories of the year drawing to a close. They started with Henry, darted here and there and circled back to Henry again. Pagie, she thought, calling him by the name the young folks had given him, Pagie had been just perfect. She could see him those first evenings in this little house. He would come in from the store nearby, and walk about their small domain, admiring everything and praising her taste in the arrangement. He noticed every plan she made for his comfort and he would draw her to his side, calling her the dearest and wisest as well as the handsomest of wives. She smiled a little over the magnifying power of his enthusiasm. And yet she loved this impulsiveness of his, so different from her more placid spirit.

The empty rooms had seemed strangely still after the bustle of coming and going at the old home. She would have been lonely, perhaps, if it had not been for the music which William's Corinth had introduced. Music had always been a part of her life of course. All the Rider children had the Welsh gift for song which Aunt Phoebe had developed, and their father, brushing up the memories of his work with Hastings in the Utica choir, had trained and cultivated. They sang easily and well, and the girls frequently carried separate parts as they went about their household tasks. But, although William played pleasantly upon the flute, it was not until Corinth brought her piano that music assumed more than a casual place.

What a world of enjoyment she had opened to them with those

books of Cantatas and Glees! The smile in Mary's eyes deepened as she picked up her work again. They had all been learning to sing by note, and during the long quiet hours of the afternoon she had practiced her parts. Then several evenings a week, she and Henry had driven out to the farm, to join the others in the big room. She had sung soprano with Cornelia, and the tomboy Fras was the alto with a voice of mellow softness that promised to develop power as she grew older. Henrietta Wilbur was paired with Sarah. Both girls had high sweet voices, but Sarah, who had the keener ear, could give the steady pitch to Henrietta's lovely notes. Neither would have been so effective alone, but in combination they added a brilliant counter to the chorus. James and Henry were tenors and William, when he was not playing, supported his father with a fine rolling bass. Sometimes they had worked over new tunes, again they spent the evening on old favorites like "Uncle Ned" and "Dearest May." Whenever they sang "Long, Long Ago" Aunt Phoebe joined in with a thin clear voice. They had not lacked an accompaniment, for big Tom Van Dorn brought over his fiddle and Hank Burton his clarinet. These instruments, with William's flute assisted by Corinth's dashing style on the piano, made possible the effect of quite a creditable orchestra. The big surprise had been angular "Judge" Tappan. His irrepressible spirits had made him naturally almost a clown, but the melting pathos of his tenor voice cast him inevitably for the rôle of soloist in ballads of unrequited love. There were times when Mary saw Sarah's eyes dancing. The audience consisted of Justus by the fireside, beating unconscious time, Elizabeth and Phoebe with knitting needles delicately clicking, and such of the neighbors as dropped in to listen. From these impromptu gatherings a choir was organized which supplied the music and led the singing in the new white church in Woodburn. All this had meant frequent rehearsals, and Henry and Mary had found the winter evenings full, but with the coming of spring, Mary had been obliged to drop out. There was so much to do at home to get ready for the baby that was on the way.

Henry, having found a partner who could look after the store in his absence, was planning a trip to Rutland, partly to see his family and his boyhood friends again, but quite as much to show them his pretty wife and his baby daughter. It was a great adventure for Mary, who had never been farther from home than St. Louis. Stagecoach travel was familiar to her, but at Chicago they boarded a steamer, for Henry's memories of the trip from Detroit had not been so dulled by the lapse of six years that he cared to take her and the baby over that stretch of road. He told her that she would prefer the extra days on the water, even though they might all be sick, and in truth she found she had plenty of time to become used to the choppy motion and to learn to enjoy the sense of ease and freedom from care. Really it was with regret that she stepped ashore at Buffalo. Here the adventure took on what would have been a terrifying aspect if she had not been able to cling to her husband, for they arranged to travel over the new railroad lines from Buffalo to Albany. They went to the station early, since no one could tell them just when the train would start. They paid their fare to the end of the first line and received metal disks to give to the conductor. Then they were free to go out to the platform, where they watched the hissing, snorting locomotive make up the train, moving forward and backward, picking up first one car then a second and third, with all the intelligence of a live thing. Mary admitted it was wonderful, but she shrank against her husband every time the monster whistled. At last the train was ready and they could climb aboard, but there a real difficulty presented itself. The door was extremely narrow, as was the aisle inside the car, and for Mary to get in with her wide hoopskirt was next to impossible. Henry had to take the handbag and the basket in addition to the baby he was already carrying, and leave her with both hands free for the struggle. She felt she must have perished of mortification if she had not seen that all her fellow travelers of the female sex were having the same trouble. Finally she worked her way to Henry's seat, where she could sink down and turn her burning face to the window, feel-

THE COURTHOUSE AT INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

(From "The United States Illustrated" by Charles A. Dana)

THE MISSOURI RIVER

(From "The United States Illustrated" by Charles A. Dana)

ing the kindly shelter of her bonnet-brim between her and the amused eyes of the strange men in the car.

The speed when they got under way was startling. Henry said it must be twenty miles an hour and Mary would have believed any fantastic tale. She was glad of the frequent stops, now to fill the wood-car for the locomotive from the railroad woodpile on the right of way, now to fasten down the iron top-strip which had come loose from the wooden rails on which they ran, now to make connection with some dilatory stage from up-country. It was all very exciting and it was a great convenience to be able to get from Buffalo to Albany in a day and a half instead of taking the five days which was the fastest time that the express packet on the Canal could make, but the frequent changes were surely a nuisance, and Mary was relieved to hear that from Albany to Rutland they could travel once more by stage.

It was the same famous "Red Bird" that had carried Henry seven years before, and Mary was delighted with the smoothness and ease with which they rolled along. She privately doubted whether railroads would ever take the place of well equipped stages in sections where roads could be so good.

The Rutland visit was a trifle terrifying. There were so many of these Pages and they were all so tall. They did their best to make her feel at home, but the repression and quiet of their New England manner made her shy, accustomed as she was to the more obvious demonstration of the West. While the spacious beauty of the white house on the Rutland green woke a responsive thrill, the cool masses of the mountains which seemed to press against the windows hemmed her in and smothered her. Then Henry fell ill and she felt more than ever lost and afraid. Altogether her joy when he was well again was enhanced by the thought that now they could consider their return. She was dutifully glad that she had met all Henry's people, she would enjoy writing to them and visiting them again some day, perhaps, but she was content to live in Illinois.

Still there was a thrill to be extracted from the situation of return-

ing from so far a journey. She reveled in the round of visits from curious neighbors and in the chats with her sisters who wanted to know all that she had seen and done. The excitement lasted for several weeks, and then life slowly took on its normal tone again, and the musical evenings once more began. Now, however, the group met in the living-room of William Rider's new brick house, which stood a hundred and fifty feet forward and to one side of the little frame cottage of his father. It was an ambitious structure in comparison with the usual houses of the village, a full two stories high at one side, although the other end and the "ell" in the rear were partly underground on the first floor and were used as cellars. There were attempts at a more ornate architecture than the old house boasted, for the main door which was on the second story had side lights and a brass knocker, and the wide flight of white wooden steps leading down to the lawn gave it a certain dignity. Pagie promptly dubbed it Rider Hall, and a patriarchal attitude which William was adopting toward his family caused the nickname to stick.

As the days lengthened toward spring Henry and Mary became aware of a pretty romance that was developing before their eyes. Tom Van Dorn had fallen in love with Henrietta Wilbur. This in itself was not surprising, for Henrietta was becoming a very attractive girl at seventeen, but the outcome of this natural proceeding was most unexpected. Henrietta had been deprived of even such scanty opportunities for education as the neighborhood afforded, while Tom's family was in comfortable circumstances and his advantages had been many. In vain did Tom stoutly assert that Henrietta as she was suited him to the ground; the girl was cruelly conscious of her deficiencies. She loved him, oh, indeed, she loved him, but she was not fit to be his wife; because she loved him she would not shame him by becoming a clumsy mistress of such a home as he would have. Mary often wondered how the snarl could be untangled. But Tom Van Dorn found the way. He appeared one evening with the catalogue of the Jacksonville Ladies' College,

which offered a course in the essentials of education and expensive accomplishments, which would prepare for the best circles of society the young ladies committed to its care. If Henrietta would promise to marry him when she was through, he would send her to Jacksonville, and she could take the whole course and every accomplishment there offered, the more expensive the better. All he asked was that she should not become too refined for her lover in Woodburn. Henrietta had agreed to an engagement on these terms, and radiant with happiness had set out on her adventure in search of knowledge and social grace.

Romance being in the air, it was not long after Henrietta's departure that Mary's sister Cornelia, in spite of some opposition from her brother William, was married to Hank Burton.

* * *

The year 1845 was a fateful one for Henry and Mary Page. In the summer their son was born and named William after his grandfather Page, and before Mary had fully time to recover her strength, disaster without warning overtook them. Henry discovered one morning on entering the store that the cash till had been emptied, and when he sought his partner to consult with him as to what measures should be taken to apprehend the thief, the partner was nowhere to be found. Later in the day he learned that the firm's account in the St. Louis bank had been drawn out and the accumulated earnings were gone with the cash. Bills for stock were due and must be met. Ruin stared Henry in the face, but for the moment his bitterest grief was the loss of faith in the man he had worked with for three years. With William Rider he went over the assets of the firm, and they decided that no rehabilitation was possible. The remaining stock was sold out, and Henry locked the doors of the store for the last time. He had a debt of considerably over a thousand dollars on his shoulders and absolutely nothing else. The rent on the little house was paid until the end of the month, but after that Mary and the babies would not have even a shelter that they could call their own.

Another element of suffering was added to the situation in an estrangement from a valued friend. During the days of his apparent prosperity, Henry had loaned money to Tom Van Dorn, taking his notes to the amount of five hundred dollars. It had been necessary in closing out his business to draw in this loan, and in all probability Henry was unfortunate in his method of approach to his friend. Van Dorn was either temporarily embarrassed so that he could not take up the debt, or else, being a man of quick temper, he was so indignant at the manner in which the demand was made that he would not accede to it. Whatever the cause, the misunderstanding was complete, and instead of subjecting the matter to private discussion Henry was so ill-advised as to take it to law. He had won his case, and the five hundred dollars had been used in settling such claims of his firm as might be met, but he had lost a friend. Van Dorn would not have anything to do with him, even carrying it to the length of avoiding a meeting wherever possible, and both Henry and Mary missed his cheery companionship at a time when their courage was at its ebb.

Beside this grief for the loss of friends, beside the anguish of anxiety, the bewildered turning over of ways and means, Henry was suffering an agony of self-reproach. He felt that he was at fault in trusting his rascally partner, that he ought to have been a better judge of men. He blamed himself bitterly for putting Mary's marriage money into the business, so that even that little anchor to windward was gone. And when he voiced his sense of failure to Mary, she was too frightened by the poverty that threatened them to hearten him as her mother might have done. Mary had known poverty, and a chill of dread was on her now, further depressing her spirits already weakened by her physical condition. She could still hide her terror from her husband, but she cried for hours when he was out of the house, and when at night he returned worn by a day of disheartening struggle with his mounting difficulties, he found her listless and pale from protracted grief. At such times she

looked so frail that his heavy heart smote him afresh to think that he had brought her to such a pass.

There were two lines of action possible to Henry at this time. He might seek some new opening in Woodburn, or he might go further west and try his fortune there. During the winter of 1845, there was great popular interest in the territory to the west. Fremont had made his first exploration of the Great Plains and the Pacific slope, and his Journal which had been submitted to Congress had been printed by the government, and ten thousand copies distributed to the people of the United States. Many of these copies found their way into Illinois, and the country described formed the basis of much discussion in the groups at country stores. Henry must have heard it canvassed thoroughly by the loafers about his stove.

Lansford W. Hastings, an ambitious American who had entered the Mexican territory of California from Oregon in 1843, had conceived the scheme of emulating Houston of Texas by wresting the land from Mexican control and making a republic of it. He had obtained a land grant from Mexico, and after consultation with Houston, he had come east to encourage emigration to his new holding. He had written a book, "Travel in the Rocky Mountains," which was published in 1845, praising the country inordinately and without much regard for accuracy. He offered generous terms to settlers, and attracted by his glowing accounts Mr. Donner of Springfield, Illinois, was organizing a large party to take the overland trail in the spring of 1846. Henry knew of their enterprise, for meetings to rouse interest in the western lands were held by Mr. Donner not only in Springfield, but in adjoining towns as well. Henry may even have attended one of these meetings, for the Western fever in his blood, which had already led him a third of the way across the continent, would tend to make him look with favor on such an adventure; but when he broached the subject to Mary, she utterly broke down. The thought of leaving her kindred, who now seemed all that she had left, was more than she could bear, and with an agony of tears she implored Henry not to think of such a

move. If he took them on such a dreadful journey, she knew neither she nor the children would survive the trip, and if he left her behind while he went ahead to make a place for them, she was certain she would die of grief and loneliness. Surely, surely there were chances nearer home that he could take. She would not say a word against it, if this were the only opportunity for them, but there was that place near the old home. Then her words became incoherent with pleadings that he forgive her for crying, that she was weak and silly, that whatever Pagie decided was right and best. And Henry kissed and comforted her, and set aside the chance though perhaps not without an inward reluctance.

As the next best thing, he decided after consultation with William to buy the farm that Coates was offering for sale. To be sure the land was divided up into three pieces, with a ten acre tract around the house at the crossroads, forty acres a quarter of a mile down the road to the south, and forty more of woodland in the river bottom, two and a half miles away. This would be awkward to handle, but to offset this disadvantage was the fact that the pasture land bordered on the Riders' western boundary, and if Henry chose to have cows he could coöperate with the Riders in the manufacture of cheese. When he wrote to his father in Rutland for assistance in making this start, William Page agreed to purchase the land and to lend his son what he must have to equip the place, but he arranged to retain the title until Henry should have paid off the money advanced to him. If Henry so wished, he could set himself the task first of clearing away the debts remaining from his unfortunate "mercantile enterprise," but until he had properly earned the land, the farm would belong to his father. With this agreement the purchase was made and in the spring of 1846, when the now famous Donner Party was setting out on its ill-fated journey, Henry and Mary Page with their two little ones moved into the farmhouse on the Alton road.

The beginning they could make was a very modest one and the home they had was very near the first principles of pioneer living,

for which neither of them was in any way fitted. How they would have managed through the first months without the friendship and assistance of young John Gragg, who owned the farm across the road, neither of them knew. The Riders, after helping Henry with the heaviest plowing, were immersed in their own spring work and too far away in any case to see the blunders that the ex-storekeeper was making; but John Gragg was near at hand, quick to note their inexperience, and prone to give the large-hearted interpretation of the frontier to the word neighbor. He it was who told Henry that Alfred Davis, old hunter Davis's blacksmith son, was making as good a mold-board plowshare out of old boiler plate as any sold in St. Louis, and for about a quarter of the cost. Hank Burton put the woodwork on them and they did good work too. When the plow had been bought he showed Henry how to set a stick in the ground where he wanted his furrow to end, and how by tying a white rag to this stick and keeping the gleam of white between his horses' ears he could make a furrow as straight as those in any man's garden.

Apparently the only help that Henry had was such as could be rendered by a young boy, George Dodge, who assisted with the chores before and after school and had his fees paid to Mr. Clark the schoolmaster in lieu of wages. All the other drudgery of house and field must be done by Henry and Mary. At daybreak, Henry would rise and make up the fire, and then while he and George tended and milked the cattle, Mary cooked the breakfast. When the men were fed and on their way to work, she must bathe and dress the children before she could clear away the breakfast dishes or set the house to rights. There were all the small economies of the first days in Woodburn village to be practiced, for little could be spared from the scant earnings of the farm for clothing the family. All that was possible must go to paying off their debts. So Mary turned and patched and contrived. She did the washing and found that the clothing of a man and a boy working on a dairy farm gets very dirty indeed; she baked and preserved, she weeded and tended the

little vegetable garden which Henry made for her near the house, she watched over her chickens, she cleaned and scrubbed and swept, and she did all these things not with an orderly progression, but interruptedly, by fits and starts, as the demands of her two lively children permitted.

Her strength had not been sufficient for her share of the household duties in her girlhood; under this far greater strain it was naturally giving way again. The neuralgia returned, at first in blinding spasms of pain with days of ease, but finally with a grinding steady ache in back and head that took its toll in frayed nerves; and the winter storms aggravated a trouble which might otherwise have disappeared with the lessened work.

Meanwhile Henry was hardly any better, for farm work was new to him; he did things clumsily, and probably like most beginners chose the hardest way to accomplish a given task. There was a great deal to be done, grain to be planted for winter feed, corn that required constant hoeing, and hay to be moved and gathered in. He found that the handling of scythe and cradle, even the swinging up of a forkload of hay, demanded a peculiar skill which he was exasperated to find he could not master at first. He fumbled and made trouble for himself. He could not afford to hire help even at the haying and harvest season, so that his only means of securing the extra hands he needed at this time was by the process of "changing work" with his neighbors. That is, he would give his services to help garner their crops if they in turn would assist with his. This added weeks of back-breaking labor at long hours, before and after which he must find time for the milking of his cows and the routine care of his stock. The heavy work coming upon him without any preliminary course of training seemed to weaken rather than harden him, and through the harvest days he suffered continually with his back. He came home at night stupid with fatigue and often fell asleep in his chair while Mary was placing their supper on the table. There was no time now to take part in the musical evenings at William's, there was little heart even for talk with Mary when

the day was done. All the energies of both were fixed on the mere physical endurance of what each day brought.

When harvest was over, there was the year's supply of wood to be cut down and brought out of the woods from their wood-lot more than two miles away, chopped into stove lengths and split. The winter was nearly over when this was completed, and such respite as it gave him before spring plowing was too short for him to regain fully his overtaxed strength. Both he and Mary started their second year with less physical reserve than had been theirs a twelve-month earlier.

But there were considerations which reconciled them to the choice that they had made. First they were able to take up one of the debts in the legacy from the firm. As Henry laughingly said, at that rate they might own the farm in time to celebrate Tintie's wedding if she did not marry too young; but at least it was a beginning. Then late in the summer of 1847, word began to trickle back to Illinois of the fate of that Donner Party which Henry had so nearly joined. The rumors were vague, but the very indefiniteness added to the horror. They had been delayed too long on the road and winter had trapped them in the Sierran Mountains. Some said that all had died miserably there of hunger and of cold; others maintained that a handful had been rescued who had kept themselves alive by feeding on the bodies of the dead. These rumors were exaggerated, but the truth was dreadful enough. Of the eighty-one who had started from Springfield, only forty-five lived to get through; and of these forty-five survivors, thirty-two were children for whom the elders had starved themselves to death. Even these would never have reached California by their own efforts. They managed to get word of their plight out to Captain Sutter, the American Alcalde of the Sacramento River district, who organized three rescue parties laden with food. The first of these got in to the starving emigrants, and it was this supply which kept them alive until the fourth relief, sent out by the military governor of California in 1847, could reach them. This last rescue party reported that in two cases the flesh of the dead

was used, once by a mother who fed it to her children but who died rather than touch it herself, and once by a man who was the sole survivor of his group.

With blanched faces Henry and Mary heard the exaggerated versions of the tragedy, and for days thereafter went about their heavy tasks with a mingled feeling of horror and thankfulness for what they considered their escape. They had need for whatever philosophy they might summon, for in the second season on the farm, sickness played its part. Fever and ague, the curse of those southern Illinois prairies, claimed Henry and added intermittent illness to the burden he was already carrying. Then Willie was taken with typhoid fever and hung for days between life and death, days when Doctor Grinsted came and went, his jolly face serious and intent: when Corinth took small Tintie to the brick house to stay, when Elizabeth and the girls shouldered Mary's usual duties, and William and James relieved Henry in the fields so that father and mother might take turns by the bedside of the sick baby. It seemed as if it were the united strength and will-power of the whole family group which tided the little fellow past the danger point and set him on the firm ground of recovery.

So the year wore on and when the reckoning came, they tried to be glad that the farm had made enough to meet the doctor's bills, and to close their eyes to the debts still unpaid. It was an effort to throw off their depression and to enter into the festivities attendant on Sarah's marriage to Squire Meade of Shipman and the wedding of Henrietta Wilbur to Tom Van Dorn. But the effort was made and, amid the general rejoicing, Tom set aside his quarrel with Henry and the old friendship was renewed.

The heavy rains of the following spring flooded their cellar, and since money was not available to make repairs, Henry undertook to dig a drain which would keep it dry and to relocate the well. In the process he brought on the back trouble which tormented him each harvest time. His chills and fever of course were worse in spring and, although he managed to drag himself about his daily round,

his nerves showed the strain. The impulsiveness which had been one of his charms sharpened into irritability, and, for the first and only time in his life, Henry Page was almost ill-tempered. He snapped at the children, he was short with young George Dodge, and at times he bit his tongue on some angry word to Mary—Mary whose face was growing thin, and whose eyes were so often shadowed with pain. He had not yet lost his temper with her, but he lived in horror of the day when he should. Life was becoming a nightmare to him and to Mary, and he saw no way out. It was a treadmill in which they went on and on, yet were never any further along their way.

Then, late in the fall of 1848, came news of gold discovered in California. Henry heard it first from Hank Burton, who rode over from Bunker Hill and perched on the fence of the field where he was shocking corn. He said it was just a rumor, but there might be something in it, that the boys in Carlinville and Alton were all agog and every one was eager for whatever news there was. Gossip had it that gold had been found on the land of that Captain Sutter who had tried to rescue those poor Donners and their party, and that people from the coast of South America and even the Sandwich Islands were rushing to the mines. Of course there might be nothing in it, but, if there was, Hank had about made up his mind to go out and try his fortune. He would have to consider the future, now he had a baby daughter to support, and perhaps, if he struck gold and came back rich, William Rider might think he was good enough for Teen. He asked if Pagie would go with him. He pointed out that the farm could be rented and that Mary and the children could live on the rent, and he wound up by asserting that Pagie and Mollie both looked as if a change would not hurt them.

Henry could scarcely believe his ears. This way of escape was too bizarre for him to dare to hope, but even while he pointed out to Hank the uncertainty and improbability of it all, the excited blood was pounding in his ears. As soon as his friend had left him, he

turned from the unfinished corn shocks and made his way over the fields to the house to talk it over with Mary.

But Mary unfortunately had been having one of those dreadful days when everything goes wrong. She had wakened with one of her headaches and had begun the day by breaking a dish which was a cherished wedding gift. The bread sponge set the night before was a failure, due to some defect in the yeast, and the waste as well as the fruitless labor assumed to her sick fancy the dimensions of a tragedy. Willie had been all day at his obstreperous worst. When Henry came in, her head was aching so that she could not take in half that he said, but she did grasp that some news had set him off again in that idea of going to California. She sat down suddenly, feeling as if her knees were giving way. Henry's eager voice went on and on, but she could not follow him, and at last she broke in, begging him not to go. Henry stopped as if he had been struck. He had been so sure that her hopes would unite with his. He got up impatiently, declaring that it was all a rumor anyway, and telling her for pity's sake not to get stirred up over nothing. When Mary, at the end of her endurance and hurt by his sharp tone burst into tears, he stood looking down at her for a moment and then for the first time in their married life he refused to comfort her and flung out of the room. Nevertheless, he did not entirely relinquish the idea.

The company with which Henry Page and his friends finally went to California, had evidently been organized before starting, as it had printed copies of a Constitution and By Laws to distribute before leaving St. Joseph. In absence of any record, it may be presumed that this preliminary organization followed the usual steps taken at this time by those meditating a trip across the plains. The prime mover in this case was Dr. A. R. Knapp, of Jerseyville, in the adjoining county. He collected such books, papers and letters as he could find which would give information about the projected trip, he gave lectures in the surrounding counties, and undoubtedly came to Carlinville, the county seat of Macoupin County, where, just as surely, Henry Page and Henry Burton and the rest who were con-

sidering the venture went to hear him. He would have the latest news from the mines, as well as Hasting's Travels and Fremont's Journal. He would show Fremont's map of the various routes across the plains. He would point out why the Oregon Trail, leading as it did into Northern California, was the shortest road to the mines. He would explain, in favor of the land route, that the trip around the Horn was generally longer, and the way over the Panama Isthmus uncertain in its connection with ships, and much too expensive for the ordinary purse. He would go into details of equipment, that each man's ration should be equivalent to one hundred and fifty pounds of flour, two hundred pounds of meal, and sixty pounds of bacon. He would suggest the Conestoga wagon as the best for the purpose, since every wagon must be capable of carrying a double load, and every team, whether of oxen or of mules, must be able to haul twice the weight of this double load. He would enlarge on the need of organization for safety and speed in so hazardous an enterprise, and he would urge all present to join the company by paying the initial fee of one dollar, which would entitle them to vote for the Committee which should draw up the Constitution and By Laws.

The effect of this meeting on Henry Page and his friends was to remove all doubt as to the wisdom of going to California, but they knew that a company was being formed in Alton, and they felt that, while Dr. Knapp's group would be well organized, more of their neighbors would be among the Alton emigrants. They therefore determined to reserve their decision as to which company they would join until both could be seen in action.

But when Henry Page strove to bring his Mary to his way of thinking about the California venture, he was without success. Mary listened to his enthusiastic account of Dr. Knapp's meeting in tight-lipped silence, and when she spoke of the matter at all, it was to emphasize the dangers of the way and the long separation. There was a tension between them which heightened every day and which finally snapped in a serious quarrel. While the minute details of this

quarrel can never be known, much may be inferred from the allusions to it in Henry's letters. It came at the time when Henry told her that he had definitely determined to risk all in this chance to restore their fortunes, and that he was preparing to sell their belongings for the money required to equip his expedition. It was brought on probably by some trivial discussion over what should be included in the sale. Both had been living for a long time on their nerves, and when the explosion came they said far more than they meant and much that they afterward bitterly regretted. Mary was a woman with a clinging and dependent disposition, and she was thoroughly frightened at the thought of being left with the children and the management of their affairs. Moreover, she was approaching this trial with courage sapped and health broken by years of unaccustomed toil such as would have taxed a far stronger woman. Now she flared out and voiced all the smothered disappointments and irritations of the past three years. Henry, too, had lost all control, and his sarcastic comments drove her wildly on. She evidently taunted him with his lack of judgment in choosing his business partner, and referred to the loss of her small patrimony, and to Henry's failure to care for his family in decent comfort. In the end, she said words which were to haunt her later, that if he went on this fool's errand he need not hurry to return. Henry retorted, as far as can be made out, with an accusation that she had never loved his as she should, that at all the crises of their lives she had been supine, and he had been obliged to carry all the burdens and his wife as well. There was much more before exhaustion brought them to silence, staring at each other, haggard-eyed, across the wreck of their former peace. Both were aghast, but neither could make the first move toward reconciliation, for the grains of truth beneath the mountains of exaggeration had caused too deep a hurt. As the days went by, they grew to avoid being alone together, the barrier daily growing higher between them.

It was easy to be busy with many things, for there was much to do. Arrangements were made to rent the farm to a man named

King and his wife, newcomers to the country. Two fine young steers, Jack and Jerry, that Henry planned to break in for the team, and the cows which were to go to William's were driven over to the Rider place, but the rest of the stock, all the household furniture and the farm implements, were put up to sale and brought in a certain amount of cash and a number of notes payable in a year's time. The cash was all needed for Henry's equipment, but the deferred payments were to be used by Mary and the children.

On New Year's day in 1849, the farm was turned over to King, and the Pages drove to the Rider place where William had arranged that Mary should have the top floor of the brick house during her husband's absence. The use of Mary's cows was to pay for her board, and such ready money as she might need her brother would advance and reimburse himself when the sale notes began coming in. Mary would have leisure from housekeeping, and it was hoped that the comparative rest would build up her strength. There were two bedrooms on the third floor of William's house and a large closet where she could keep her trunks and boxes. Being on a separate floor, she would have an opportunity for a little privacy when she wished to be by herself.

* * *

Elizabeth Rider's quick eyes soon saw that all was not well between Mary and Henry, and, after several weeks of silent watching, she made an opportunity to see them both alone. With gentle insistence, she drew out the whole miserable tale. Her quality of detached justice enabled her to see the right and wrong on both sides. She told Henry he had been foolish in his blind trust of his partner, but she pointed out that, in the California enterprise, he had a new chance to make good. As a man, he should have been able to keep steady even under such trials as theirs, particularly when his wife was giving way. He should have been stronger than she, instead of which he admitted that he had frequently been irritable and by unreasonable chiding of the children—Elizabeth ignored his upbraiding of Mary—had made hard days harder for his wife. Then,

turning to Mary, she said that a charge of weakness might fairly be made against her. In weeping over their troubles, she had used energy that might better have been put to mending them, and by so doing she had failed in the duty of a wife to be a helpmeet in adversity. This coming separation would give her a chance to show that she could acquire the strength to keep up good courage for Henry's sake. But after all, she asked, what were these failures for which she was arraigning them? A mistake in judgment any one might make. Irritability when heavily taxed was unfortunate, but no more a crime than undue depression in trouble. They were trivial things to wreck one's married happiness. They were in danger, these two, of forgetting in a silly quarrel the great love which should have been theirs. A long separation should open their eyes to the blessing of a companionship to which perhaps they had grown too accustomed. It usually took death to teach this lesson, and they might feel singularly blessed that the Lord had not dealt so with them, but was giving them a second chance. If during this time of discipline they set themselves to building up the virtues which they were lacking, if Henry got control of his temper, if Mary strengthened her will and conquered depression, and if each learned to value truly the love of the other, then the time would be the most profitable of all their lives. Meanwhile, as a beginning in wisdom, she said each owed the other an apology and she would leave them to do what they knew was right. Before she could reach the door they were in each other's arms.

* * *

Three months went quickly in the bustle of preparation. Hank Burton brought the news that Tom Van Dorn would join them, not because his comfortable circumstances needed bettering, but through inability to resist an adventure. So Cornelia and Henrietta came frequently to the farm to sew and knit with Mary, and in the closet on the third floor there were growing piles of coarse shirts such as miners would need, and reserve socks for men without womenfolk to darn for them.

When they were not sewing they gathered in the kitchen to pare and cut the apples which must be dried for use on the long journey, and they made lists of the preserves that each could spare from their winter's supply to add a delicacy to the heavy meals of hungry men. William had killed a steer and some pigs, and beef was drying, pork was in pickle, and the smoke house was working out of season to prepare the needed hams. Corinth, famed as a maker of delicious butter, was filling a crock for them, and Elizabeth took the scraps that any of them would give her to help swell her contribution of soap. Flour, cornmeal, crackers, and beans were bought in St. Louis, with the joint funds of the three "Californians," and one of the Rider wagons returning from a trip to town with cheese, brought back the load which was stored in the barn.

When at last the brand new Conestoga wagon was delivered at the farm, they all trooped out to examine it and to exclaim over the ark of a vehicle. Henry recognized with delight the "Hoosier wagon" that had taken his fancy in Chicago over ten years before. There were the same blue wheels and red body shaped like a boat with a long curve that raised the front and rear above the middle and so would prevent the load from spilling on the steep grades of mountain travel. The bottom of the body was fully fourteen feet long, and it was equipped beneath with overlapping tongues and a pin, so that the wheels might be coupled closer together if the exigencies of the road demanded it. The sides of the wagon-bed were five feet high, and front and back projected well beyond the lower dimension. Even before the three feet of extra height in the bows was added, it seemed to tower, and the stout build gave it a tremendous weight, near a thousand pounds empty as it was, said Henry. There were twelve bows to hold the canvas wagon-sheet, the front and rear ones being higher than the middle, to keep rain draining back from the openings.

With the coming of the wagon the work of breaking in the team began. A pair of oxen had been bought of the Davises, Tom Van Dorn had driven over a well-broken team of his, and Henry must

train in Jerry and Jack to do their share of the hauling. The wagon was trundled down to the pasture and driven slowly back and forth with a load of children for gleeful passengers. Richard trudged beside Henry, trying to imagine that he was with him on the Oregon Trail. He had been wild with eagerness to join the party, especially after it was known that Mr. Long was going to take his son Frank, who was younger than Richard. But Justus had put a quietus on the youngster's plans with that firmness which by its very quality of loving understanding had always made his children prompt to obey.

Busy days were followed by equally strenuous nights, for farewell visits must be paid and dinners and merrymaking were planned by the neighbors in honor of the "Argonauts." Everywhere there were good wishes and much speculation as to the real extent of the gold fields. John Gragg was the most eager in his questioning. Although he had not been able to order his affairs so that he might accompany this early party, his heart was in the venture, and, if conditions found in California seemed to warrant it, he hoped to take the road in 1850. He asked Henry to write him when they reached the mines and thus give him the benefit of their experience on the plains, a promise which Henry gladly made.

The final step in the preparation was the packing of the wagon, a task which required all the skill that they could muster, for the heavy stores must be well balanced and stowed so that they would stay in place on the roughest road, yet there must be a level space large enough not only for their own three beds, but also for the fourth partner whom they would pick up from among the friends who were preceding them to the rendezvous at St. Joseph. It had been the custom of the emigrants using the overland routes to gather in the early spring at a number of places along the Great Bend of the Missouri River where towns had been growing up to meet their needs. Independence, St. Joseph, and the settlement at Council Bluffs, which the Mormons used as their forwarding depot, owed their existence to the traffic across the Santa Fé and the northern

trails. In planning to collect at one or the other of these rendezvous and camp there to await the springing of the grass on which they must depend for fodder, the gold-seekers of 1849 were following an accepted practice.

When everything was in place on the evening of April tenth, the men called the women to inspect their handwork and to view their housekeeping arrangements. They set a box by the front wheels, and, amid much laughter and excitement, assisted the ladies in at the front entrance. Corinth had brought her crock of butter, which was carefully stowed, and Elizabeth saw with satisfaction that at least some of her soap was in easy reach. Henrietta, Cornelia and Mary cast eager eyes on the comforts of their men, tried the beds, and found to their surprise that, when seated on the pallets ranged along the sides, there was plenty of headroom, even in the center where the canvas roof swayed the lowest.

Mary lingered with Henry behind the rest when they descended, busying herself with writing on the new strips that braced the bows in place above her husband's bed, the message that he quotes in the first letter written on the road. When the voices dying in the distance told them that they were alone, she turned as if she too would go, but at the forward end she paused and dropped down on Tom's little trunk, which served for a seat. Her handkerchief was in her lap, and she alternately crushed it together and spread it out again with trembling fingers, a habit she had when agitated, while the words poured out in a torrent. She could never forgive herself for the bitter things she had said that time when she had been angry. Pagie had always been so good to her—always and always—she could not bear it that he was going away remembering how hateful she had been. When Henry sat down beside her and drew her into his arms, she could only cling to him and sob helplessly, murmuring incoherent things of which he only caught his name "Pagie" again and again. He stroked the soft dark hair and kissed her on wet eyes and trembling mouth, holding her close until the tearing sobs were still. Then he told her he did not know what she was talking about,

that the whole quarrel was now forgotten by him, he could not call it to mind even if he would,—that she was his little "wifey," the best wife a man ever had and far too good for him, who had failed to care for her and the children. And he kissed the fingers she laid upon his lips.

After a while Mary straightened up, and wiping her eyes assumed a prettily admonitory air. She had not stayed behind to cry like a baby, but to give him a present, and she drew from her pocket a leather covered memorandum book with blank leaves for a diary and a pocket for papers concealed in the back cover. She wanted Henry to write in it every day, and, when the time came for letters, to copy it for her, leaving out unimportant matters, but thus making sure that nothing vital to him was forgotten. With hesitation and many pauses, with eyes more often on the buttons of his coat than on his face, she said that she knew he was going into a life of temptation, but she hoped the little book would make him feel near to her. She would be praying for him always and she knew he would do nothing wrong. Henry took her hands in a firm strong clasp that satisfied her like a promise.

Early on the morning of April eleventh, the clan began to gather. Squire Meade came driving in with Sarah, and close on their heels came Tom Van Dorn and a white-faced but determinedly cheerful Henrietta. Cornelia and Henry Burton, with their baby, had spent the night in the little house to be early on the field. There was a big, jolly breakfast with all the family under one roof again, and then they moved into the yard to watch the yoking of the ox-team. The mask of good spirits was beginning to wear thin and all were relieved when the doctor and Mrs. Grinsted arrived. The doctor had an errand that he wanted done in St. Louis, if his friends got that far, he said with twinkling eyes. He had broken his medicine scales and he needed new ones. If one of them would buy him another pair, and send it back by the mail man on the Alton boat, he would charge off the cost on the family bill. Henry declared he was the most poverty-stricken partner and most in need of credit,

so the doctor laughingly committed the errand to him. On the wave of this laughter, the boys started on their way, Hank and Tom perched on the trunk, and Henry, who wished to be responsible for the good behavior of Jack and Jerry, trudging by the side of the team, goad in hand. The whole family stood at the gate until the wagon rounded the turn in the road, then the others turned to waiting household tasks, Richard and Angie led the Page children away to the barn to play, while Mary and Teen and Henrietta, with arms entwined, climbed to the platform before the door of the brick house, whence the road could still be seen. They watched the white cover of the wagon crawling by the bit of woodland, where the buds were bursting into leaf, where the Judas-tree at the corner made a dash of faint lavender and shad-bushes by the roadside a mist of white. Slowly, slowly the wagon moved on, rose over the distant prairie swell, paused at the summit and lurched out of sight. The "Californians" were on their way.

Part Two: Record

FROM THE MISSISSIPPI TO THE PACIFIC

CHAPTER IV

"They Have Decided to Go On"

ALL through the long day, the new Conestoga wagon lumbered on its way measuring off the miles, the oxen straining slightly on their yokes as the road led over a prairie rise or pacing stately-wise on the gentle descents. Henry looked about him as if to imprint the passing scenes indelibly upon his memory, that last sight of the farm where he and Mary had worked so hard, the flutter of white from the window of William's house, the green of new grass pushing up through last year's brown, the flaunt of a cardinal on a leafless bough.

The road grew more hilly as they neared Alton, and the evening light touched to rose the white of fruit trees coming into bloom. The military post on the left hand side of the way, came into view, and one or two of the soldiers idling on the parade ground waved and shouted as they passed. To the right were the brick buildings of Shurtleff, where William had gone to college, buildings erected by the same architect who had planned the first Rider houses in Carrollton. The road wound down into a gully and up on the other side. They were in Alton now. Harriet Dewey, the sister of William's wife Corinth, was married and living in a house perched on one of the knolls at the northern outskirts of the town. This was their first objective, and at dusk they rumbled into the yard, triumphant at having covered fifteen miles on their first day in spite of the late start. It is certain that the oxen were well tended before the men tied the sheet of the wagon and repaired to the house, but it is equally certain that they did ample justice to the feast that Harriet had prepared, and that tongues flew fast when the meal had been eaten.

Some days before, as Harriet told them, the Alton Company of

emigrants to California had left for St. Louis where, they thought, by taking a steamer to St. Joseph, they would save their teams the first stage of the overland route. On the other hand, the boys said that Dr. Knapp mistrusted the safety of river travel at that time of the year, and he had led his company from Jerseyville the last week in March, intending to cross the Mississippi by ferry to Hannibal, and from thence to travel overland to the rendezvous. There was much speculation as to the comparative wisdom of the two plans, but all agreed that the two companies would probably meet in St. Joseph. Harriet told them that the boat from St. Louis brought news of tremendous crowds already gathering there, and thronging all the up-river craft. Faces grew grave at the thought of a delay in getting transportation, until Hank Burton volunteered to go ahead on the Alton packet to St. Louis to book passage for the three, while his partners could bring the wagon down to the St. Louis crossing at Wiggin's Ferry by road. This plan would give him almost a two day start in the race for space on the boats to St. Joseph, and promised a solution of their difficulty.

Early Thursday morning, they were all astir, as there were purchases to be made at Mark Pierson's General Store before the St. Louis packet left at nine o'clock. The majority of the homes of Alton's citizens, then as now, were built on the bluff above the river bottom, and a steep street led down to the square by the river. The wharves and the steamboat landing took up the western end of this square, but the other three sides were lined with stores, among them the emporium where Mark Pierson, son of a Carrollton friend, sold everything from oats, alum and salt, to dried peaches, flannel, and boots and shoes. Here they did their shopping, and doubtless had many questions to answer if Pierson himself was on duty. Half an hour before starting time, a warning blast of the steamboat's whistle drew them to the river.

At the wharf, the *Luella,* U. S. Mail packet plying daily between Alton and St. Louis, was sending up columns of smoke from the two stacks near her bow. Hank Burton made his way through the

crowd, bought his ticket and went on board. Henry and Tom Van Dorn saw him cross the deck, disappear in the cabin, and presently reappear on the deck above. In a corner near the box-covering of the big side paddle wheel, he found a space at the rail where he could lean and talk to his friends. There was more than the usual rush and bustle attending the departure, for the exodus to California was felt even here. Oxen and mules were being driven to the forward deck where loaded wagons were already standing. Teams disappointed of space were drawn up at the edge of the gangway, and there was much shouting and altercation. But at last the preparations were complete, hawsers were loosed, and with clanging of engine room bell the great paddles began to revolve. Slowly, at first, the steamer moved from the shore out into the eddies of the muddy river. Then the current caught her and she swept away, accompanied by the lines of floating débris of the spring floods.

The two partners, reclaiming their team, started on their own road. They climbed down the Alton hills to the river bottom, where the land stretched flat for miles on their left, with the sodden shapes of last year's corn shocks alternating with the vivid green of the springing fall wheat, and on their right an expanse of water with lines of feathery trees marking the boundaries of inundated fields. The mud was deep and the going slow, yet their strong team put ten miles behind them that day and they camped by the side of the road at Madison.

It was scarcely seven miles from their camping place to Wiggin's Ferry, but on Friday morning Tom had to drive the team, for Henry was shaking in one of his chills, brought on, no doubt, by the wet tramp of the previous day. Although they made an early start, with Henry on a bed in the wagon, and reached the ferry in good season, it was long after noon before they found room for their wagon on the boat. Scenes at the Alton landing were duplicated and multiplied as the ferries came and went, and before their turn came to roll the wagon down, the two partners grew very familiar with the view of the city seen over the river's swollen yellow expanse, the

lines of buildings with pointed gable ends, the occasional church spire, the "Hill" in the background with its fine houses, and the rows of ships at the water's edge.

This view took on detail as they churned across the river. They made out the Shot Tower at the northern end, and some fellow passenger told them this was the second which had been built. The first had fallen down just two hours after a committee sent to investigate it had pronounced it perfectly safe. There were limestone warehouses on the shore near the ferry landing and a row of stores on Front Street facing the twenty feet of unpaved levee. The General Taylor Hotel stood out near at hand, farther inland the square bulk of the Planter's House rose above the roofs, noticeable for its five stories' height, as the City Market at the lower end of the levee was made conspicuous by the upper story of open arches above its lower rank of shops. Everywhere was movement and confusion, the usual traffic of omnibuses and carriages augmented and all but overwhelmed by the white-covered wagons of the gold-seekers. Men pushed and jostled along the sidewalks in front of the shops in a continual stream, or picked their way through the trampled mud and piled merchandise of the levee back and forth from the ships and steamers lying as close together as it was possible to warp them.

At the "O.K. Coffee House," opposite the ferry landing, the partners found Hank who gave them the welcome news that he had secured space on a steamer which was due to leave on Saturday. They could not possibly get the wagon aboard that day, he said, because of the numbers in line ahead of them, but he had found a place on the levee not far from the steamer where they might camp, if they were quick about it, and be in readiness for the morrow. Following his lead, they pulled into the designated spot, and after unyoking and feeding the team all three strolled down to their boat. The crowd already on her decks made them uneasy. Perhaps it would be well for one to stay here and hold their space while the others returned to the wagon. It may have been that Hank was inspired to this idea by the sight of Henry's white face and the

weakness that his brother-in-law could not entirely hide. He would be better able to help with the loading after a good night's rest.

Henry watched them as long as he could distinguish their figures in the throng on the levee. They were great partners to have for such a trip; a man could not ask for better. Long after they were gone he remained where they had left him, leaning on the rail and watching the crowd which had swallowed them. The coming of dusk and fear of the effect the "night air" might have on his malaria drove him finally into the stuffy saloon. It was early yet to turn in, and still he felt no inclination to enter into the excited talk of the men about him. Mary was in his mind, and the children, and all he was leaving behind. Finding an unused inkwell and a place at the end of one of the tables he drew a sheet of paper from his pocket and started his first letter to his wife:

SAINT LOUIS 13 AP^{L} 1849.
FRIDAY EVENING

DEAR WIFE

I am writing on board the Steam Boat Bay State—We arrived in the city about 2 oclock to day, & Hank (who came from Alton on the Packet) has engaged our passage on this boat—And as I do not feel very well, I stay here & Tom & Hank have gone back to sleep in the waggon, so that all will be safe. We shall get our wagon & oxen on board early to morrow morning, and leave for S^{t} Joseph some time in the day—I stayed the first night with Harriet & last night in the wagon at Madison 10 miles from Alton—We find our team work very well & are making our load as light as we can—

Every body and his brother is going to California, you have no idea of the rush—It is now thought that some 30.000 will try to get across the plains—But I think this number to large & as there are now only about 5.000 up the Missouri—But every day adds to the number—

I had a chill to day & Tom had to drive the team all day—Last night I did not feel very well & took three Anti Billious & two Ague Pills—To day I took six Ague Pills but had a slight chill with considerable fever—Feel Much better to night tho' weak. I write this not to alarm, but because I told you, I would keep nothing from you—I am not half so bad as when I had the last chill—

Tom & Hank are very well & in good spirits—I dont feel quite so lively as usual, but still with good courage—We have concluded to go to S[t] Jo. & if we find it is not prudent to go on, on account of the great numbers, Hank & myself will then take the matter into consideration & do that which is best—Dont think dear Mary that we will rashly run into danger—If it is not prudent to go on, we shall not go—The great numbers going, may cause short feed on the last part of the journey, after we pass the Mormon settlement—This side of there, there will be no trouble—

Tell W[m] that we got $20.00 at M. Pearson & Co Store on his order—Tell D[r] Grinsted that the medicine scales cost 87½ cents—

When I think of my long absence from you dear wife, my heart almost sinks, but cannot we hope for my safe return & that you & the dear children will be kept safe is my fervent prayer—You must pray for me daily & I will do the same for you & the children—When you write you must state every thing about Willie & Cynthia that interests or troubles you—Write just as if we were talking together—How does Willie & Cynthia feel about Papa absence,—do you wish to see Papa—Papa would be glad to see you—You must be good children & see that you mind Mama—Be a good girl Tinta so that when Mama writes to Papa she can tell Papa all about you—And Willie must mind his Mama & not cry & get angry—And both of you must still love Papa (Read this to the children)

Be assured dear Mary I love you as much as ever, & do not let our former troubles, disturbe you—I only think of the dear, kind, loving wife I have so lately left. You have my heart, & I know I have yours—

So goodbye again, till we arrive at S[t] Jo, when I will write again—Good bye & pray for your

Dear Husband

HENRY PAGE

Saturday Morning

We have all on board & shall probably leave this evening—I feel much better this morning, and am pushing the Ague Pills, so that I may not have another chill—Goodby

MRS. MARY A. PAGE

WOODBURN

ILLINOIS

Postage 5¢

Mary sat in William's carriage with Willie on her lap and Tintie in the starched freshness of her Sunday clothes leaning against her knee. They had all been to church and were on their way home when some one had heard the horn of the St. Louis stage, and William had pulled out of the road opposite the tavern to wait. There might be news from the boys. They had said when they left that, if the crowds were overwhelming in St. Louis, they would return. As they would be so largely dependent upon the prairie grass for fodder, they would be foolhardy to attempt a crossing of the plains if the numbers going passed the maximum of safety. Just what this maximum was no one could agree, but the boys had promised to be conservative. The sound of the horn was nearer now. Mary clasped her hands. If her heart would not pound so, she might be the first to hear the horses' hoofbeats and the rattle and jingle of the on-coming stage. The hostlers were leading out the new team, four fine beasts glossy with recent grooming, stepping uneasily, tossing their heads with impatience to be off.

There was the stage coming in, stopping before the tavern door, and there was the guard clambering down with the mail-pouch under his arm. Mr. Allard came out to meet him. The big man was growing slow of movement these days, Mary thought. He would take forever in the sorting at that rate. Anxiously she watched him through the open door. How he fumbled with the lock! Would he never get it open? Ah, There—the thin cascade of letters, blue and white. He shook the bag, reversed it, looked inside, turned it up and shook it once more until another large red-sealed missive fluttered to his counter, then he closed it again and returned it to the guard. They chatted, Mr. Allard resting his elbows on the unsorted mail. The coachman halloed. The fresh team were in the harness and prancing with the stable boys at the leaders' heads. The guard strolled out to take his place, and Mr. Allard accompanied him to the edge of the porch. More jocose greetings, this time with the coachman. Would they never have done?

A crack of the whip! The boys let the horses go and leaped back.

The stage was gone. Mr. Allard watched it to the corner and then turned back. Now he was drawing out his glasses. Now he was hunting for his handkerchief to polish them. Now at last they were on his nose and he was stooping over the scattered letters. If only her heart would stop pounding!

"A letter for Mrs. Mary Page."

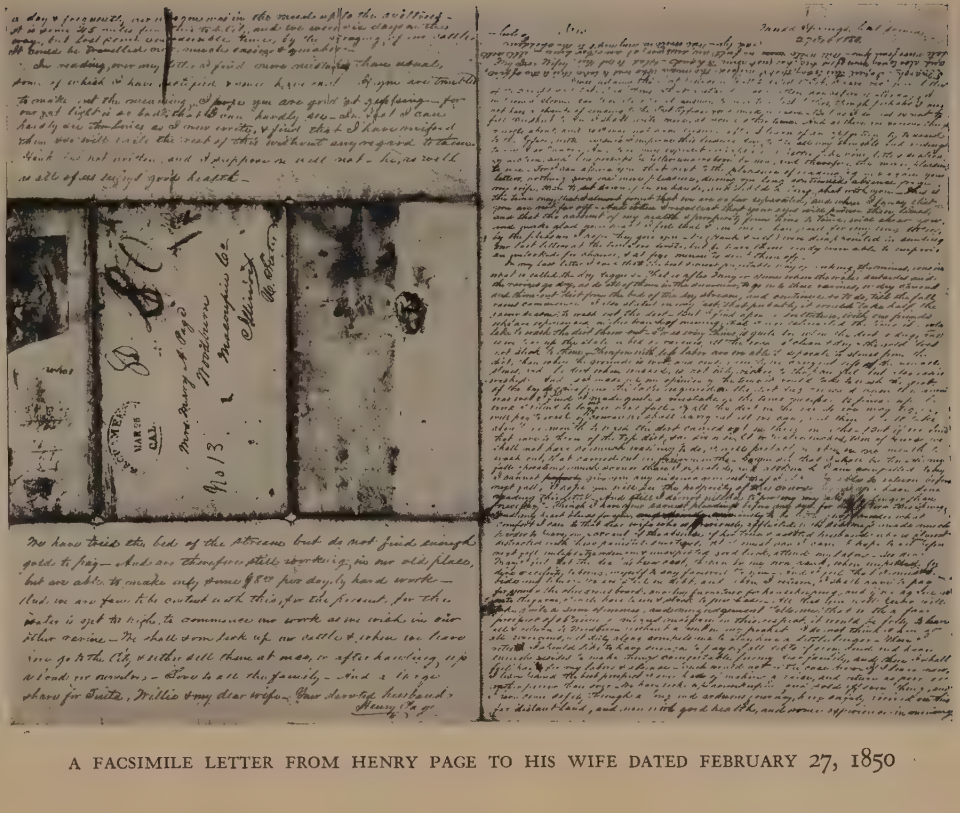
With trembling fingers she broke the wafer. Her eyes ran down the sheet. The ringing in her ears ceased. She felt as if an icy hand were closing on her heart.

"They have decided to go on," she said.

* * *

But Henry was mistaken, and it was Sunday evening before they finally slipped their moorings and started upstream. Although the *Bay State* was about twice the size of the *Alton Packet,* she was crowded to her utmost capacity, the cabins being filled to overflowing and the deck-space at a premium for passengers. The first day or two there would be little to disturb the orderly routine possible in the deep safe water. The passengers could gather about the pilot house, which was on the deck above the cabins, and listen to the tales of river tragedies, races, and breath-taking escapes which all pilots could tell, by the hour together; certain of no interruption save the occasional cry of "woodpile," when the steamer nosed against a bank to take on wood and when every available man aboard was supposed to lend a hand.

Occasionally they met another boat bound downstream, and both craft paused so that the pilots might exchange notes on the snags and shifting currents of the river ahead. For, as the Missouri grew more shallow, the excitement and the danger began. Along a bottomland between bluffs fully two miles apart, the river dug for itself a muddy, treacherously shifting channel, where the snags and uprooted trees called "sawyers" vied with the "crossings" (where the current changed from one side of the river to the other) to complicate navigation. A "sounder" had to be placed in the bow armed



A FACSIMILE LETTER FROM HENRY PAGE TO HIS WIFE DATED FEBRUARY 27, 1850

CROSSING THE ROCKIES

(From a Currier & Ives print)

with a pole to sing out the depth every five seconds, for the channel hardly remained two days the same during flood seasons, and none of the pilot's previous knowledge would be of much avail. With all this watchfulness, the boat might still go aground, and then the spars on either side the bow were let down and driven into the river-bed at an angle pointing upstream, ropes were attached to the spars and passed around the capstan, and while crew and passengers ground at the capstan-bars, the great paddle-wheels were set going in reverse to back up the water under the boat, a process which sometimes raised the level four inches. Thus the boat was literally lifted over the obstacle on stilts. At the places where the current was too strong for the engine, a "dead man," a heavy log with a line attached, was securely buried on the bank well above the rapids, the line was wound in by the capstan, and the boat was "warped" up the stream. It was often a slow process (as Chittenden says in his "History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River"), made up of "push and pull, spar and warp, back and go ahead." At times Henry and Hank and Tom bore their share in the labor involved in all this, then again they were free to stretch their legs by walking across the bends around which the steamer was making its slow way.

Near Independence, the loss of an ox made a division in the party, and Henry went ashore while the other two continued on to St. Joseph. In the day that he had to wait for another boat he had time to become acquainted with this his first rendezvous of the Overland Trail. The town was on the bluff, with the steepest of paths leading to the two boat-landings on the river. In the center of the inevitable square was a courthouse which, with its fanlight over the door and its cupola, made him think of the college chapel at Middlebury. A grassy enclosure protected by a rail fence shut this public building away from the horde of "Argonauts" who thronged the saddle and harness-shops, the wagon-makers, the blacksmith's and the taverns.

Here he heard talk of the "Platte Country" across the river, recently bought from the Indians, and of the Indian Territory

beyond it, the land guaranteed to the red man by Congress fifteen years before, where no white traveler or trader was to go without a license; and how Congress had been obliged to make treaties to permit the traffic on the Overland Trails, and only lately had allowed the War Department to place garrisons at selected points on them. Now, so gossip had it, Fort Leavenworth would not be the last outpost of Uncle Sam's protection. Laramie had been taken over from the fur-traders and a new fort was being set up between them, and named Kearney for the gallant colonel of the Dragoons. Travel would be safe enough, if only the grass was plentiful; and the talk would turn to this topic of grass, so vital to the followers of the trail—whether it would be sufficient, and when it would be high enough for trains to venture out on the road.

If Henry tired of the crowds in the square and wandered off on the side streets, he must have been amused by the brick church with its bell on a pole before the door instead of in a belfry, and perhaps he stood on the bluff and watched the yellow flood of the Missouri swirl by. He would be sure to be scanning the river for any oncoming craft, and to be early at the landing when the *Mary* made her stop. It was a two day run still to St. Joseph, which gave him time for another letter, that the steamer could carry back on her return trip:

ON BOARD ST. BOAT MARY 15 MILES
BELOW S^{T} JOSEPH 22 APRIL 1849

DEAR WIFE

This is the Sabbath, and not knowing how little time I may have at S^{t} Joseph to write, thought I would while away the passing hours in the delightful task of *talking* to my dear Mary—We left S^{t} Louis last Sunday Evening on the S^{t} Boat Bay State, & progressed rapidly & without trouble till Thursday Evening, when just below Independence one of the oxen (bought of Davis) got loose & jumped overboard & swam towards the shore—it was so dark we could not see whether he landed, or not—We concluded it best for one of us to stop at Independence & see if we could recover him—As the goods were all marked in Hanks name, we thought that I had better stop—I therefore went ashore &

Hank & Tom went on—Next morning (Friday) I went down the bank of the river & found where he landed & then went back into the country & found the ox at the first farm—I led him up to Independence and yesterday morn (Saturday) shipped on board this boat for S[t] Joseph. We found some 2000 or 2500 at Independence and report says a larger number at S[t] Jo, say 4000—Since passing the mouth of the Kansas river we have had the Indian territory on our left, the west side of the river—I can see their houses & farms along the river & they appear to be living comfortably—The right or east side of the river, is in the State of Missouri—

One cabin Passenger a M[r] Moore of Shawneetown died on the Bay State, of the cholera—He had disordered bowels for two or three days & neglected himself & was taken more violently one night & went out frequently in the course of the night—Just before daylight he called up the clerk & two or three doctors took his case in hand—But he was in the second stage, vomoting purging & cramping—it was immediately checked, but he had neglected himself so long that he could not be saved—He died that day—The next day a deck passenger died—Most of the passengers were well when I left the boat—Hank & Tom quite well—My health as good as ever—no more chills since I left S[t] Louis—I do not think that any one who uses common precaution about his living, need have the cholera at this early season—I have no inclination to a bowel complaint & am regular in my habits—I will write more about the health of the Californians when I get to St Jo—all on board this boat are healthy & have been—

I have to day thought very much about my dear wife & children & begin to realise more & more, my separation from you—Tom & Hank not being with me, I feel lone & sad and my thoughts have been with my dear Mary—I think of my absence & try to think how lonely you must be—But remember dearest, that if I am not with you, or cannot often, in future, write you, that there is no fetter to my thoughts—they are with you—You no doubt often, very think of me, & I often, often think of you—& only as the dear, kind, good wife you have ever been to your erring husband—Shall not our prayers continually ascend to God, for each other during my absence, & that all the members of our family may be preserved & be permitted to meet again on this earth—And how

does Tinta & Willie get along—are you good children & good to Emma & baby & all the rest—do you mind mama & pray to God for your absent papa—Papa prays for you, that you may be good children—mind your mama & love mama & papa—heartful—Papa still loves you dearly—God bless us all; papa, mama, daughter & son—

This upper country or Platte country as it is called, is a fine part of our country—Much better land & the towns & farms (though new) look better, than nearer the mouth of the river—We passed Weston this morning & it is as pretty a town as I have seen on the western rivers—Good situation—fine country around—& good buildings. Once in a while the Prarie is in view from the river it looks quite green——I dont know how long we shall stay at S[t] Jo. therefore I shall not finish this, till I have seen H. & T. when I hope to be able to say something definite about our future movements—Whether forward or backward—or when I cannot now say—So Goodbye for the present—

We have just met the Bay State going down—so H & T are at S[t] Jo.

In a case of deaths such as these of Mr. Moore of Shawneetown and the unfortunate deck passenger, the victim was hastily placed in a crude wooden box made by the ship's carpenter, the boat was run along the shore and a shallow grave was dug in the bank. The carpenter was kept busy night and day, if necessary, to keep ahead of the need, for there must be no delay after death. Henry's partners were fortunate to have left St. Louis as early as they did, before the cholera epidemic of 1849 which entered the West by New Orleans and followed the shipping up the rivers, had come into full swing. Later that spring, the steamer *James Monroe* was so stricken that her captain was obliged to give up all idea of attempting to reach St. Joseph. He thought he would stop at Jefferson City to put ashore his sick and dying, but the citizens of the town in a panic of fear hauled down a cannon to the landing place and threatened to blow the boat to pieces if this plan was not abandoned. The captain then dropped a mile below the town and let down his gangplanks on the open banks where his passengers crawled ashore. Later Jefferson

City rose to her occasion, turning her churches into hospitals and opening her homes to the unfortunates at her door.

The *Mary* reached St. Joseph after dark, so that it was not till morning that Henry could really see the town already famous as a rendezvous. It was a pretty place in 1849, with wooded hills for its background and the Blacksnake Creek carving a ravine down to the river. The houses clustered along the river-front and climbed the slope by the side of the smaller stream. Midway of the hill which swept upward behind the town, stood a church, and above it, on the crest, a courthouse with pillared porch and rounded dome dominated the landscape. The site had been selected and the town laid out and dedicated to his patron saint by Joseph Robidoux, one of that famous family of trappers, fur traders and scouts who acted as guides to the nation's armies in the Mexican War, and who have left their imprint on place names from Missouri to California. Founded by a pathfinder, St. Joseph was soon claimed by the Overland Trails for their own. The old road to Santa Fé and Mexico, which had its main beginning here, and the newer route to Oregon and California, had built up and maintained the industries of the place. Nineteen stores all found plenty to do in outfitting the emigrants and traders. There was a flourmill and a sawmill, two harness and saddle shops, nine blacksmiths' forges, and four wagon factories, and every place was buzzing with an activity unprecedented even in that busy place. Wagons lined the streets and were gathered in camps in every yard and field, where the task of organizing the emigrants into companies was going forward. Men were coming and going in throngs which made Henry's problem of finding his partners anything but easy, as the conclusion of his letter indicates:

SAINT JOSEPH 24 AP^{L} 1849

I landed here Sunday night, but could not find Hank & Tom—Stayed on the boat all night & Monday morn early found H. & T.—They had landed late Saturday evening & had time only to get part of the things into a storehouse—We all took hold & packed our wagon, & went out 1½ miles on the bluffs back of S^{t} Jo. to a fine spring—good timber—

a good yard for our oxen &c—where we are now camped—We are with a part of the Peoria Company, but have not made any decision, with what company we shall go on—The Alton C° are camped on the opposite side of the river about 5 miles & are to move to-morrow 20 miles further west, where they have bought corn—We cannot say whether we will go with them or not—May go out & see—S^{t} Jo is quite a town, about as large as Alton & a very pretty situation—The emagrants have not yet decided, when they can start—it may be in one week or thereabouts—We shall likely go, as soon, as the first wagons—Many from this place & Independence are going with Pack mules—they most of them will start soon & pack feed on their riding mules—& then when they come to grass & their feed gives out, will mount their mules & go ahead—A majority will go with oxen—the rest, a part with mules & waggons—& others with pack mules—

This is the first letter dear Mary, I write to you in our waggon & as I set here writing on Tom's little trunk, with my feet out of the front end of the wagon, my thoughts instantly revert to the morning when you was in this same place & I feel that I could kiss the place, that was impressed by your footsteps—You may be assured that, my having left a dear wife & children & remembering the counsels [&] advice of that wife, will always be a stay on me, to restrain me from doing [any]thing of which you would be ashamed—That love and respect I have for you dear Molly, will never abate, while life lasts—Absence, increases all those kind & dear feelings I have for you—Last night as I lay awake, I thought of you & the children, & my heart went out in prayer for you all—Poverty & necessity only has compelled me to take this step & if I am successful, & (I trust that if we are all spared to meet again), that as long as we live, we shall never be separated—Dear Mary I love you truly & as Willie says—heartful—I know you do the same—dont you feel that this last line is true—

I have wrote, just as things came into my noddle, supposing that such a chit-chat letter would be more acceptable, than one of set terms—Such a letter I should delight to receive from you—Perhaps you have wrote ere this, if so, I shall receive it before I leave S^{t} Jo—Hank & Tom will write in a day or two & I will write again before I leave S^{t} Jo—I am in first rate spirits & health & feel that for your sake I could do almost any thing

—So good by dear Mary & Tinta & Willie—May God protect & guide us to an eternal rest—Good by—Good by—

Your dear husband
PAGEY

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
ILLINOIS

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* * *

Henry had been gone just a week. Mary considered the seven endless days, her pen poised above her paper. He must be well up the Missouri now, and at St. Joseph he might find a chance to write to her. But she would have to wait for three times as many more such days before she could hope to have a letter. Even if the men decided there to turn back, it would be the middle of May before they could reach home again.

For a moment she played with the thought, imagining the white-covered wagon creaking up the road, the voice of the driver, Henry's voice, coming nearer and nearer. "Haw, Jerry! Haw, now!" Rounding the corner, coming home instead of going away. It was a foolish dream and she knew it. When they went beyond St. Louis she had been convinced that there would be no retracing of the way. Henry was gone, and perhaps she would never see him again.

Suddenly she found herself crying, helplessly, hopelessly. All the loneliness, the sense of impotence in the face of new responsibilities, the shrinking anticipation of Willie's tantrums, the terror of the unknown future, welled up and overflowed with her tears. She was torn and shaken by her sobs. Henry . . . Henry . . . If only Henry were here. . . .

All at once a thought thrust through her grief. What was it her mother had said? "Using energy in weeping over their troubles that might better have been put to mending them." She must get hold of herself. In a few moments she rose, and, pouring out some water in her basin, she bathed her hot face and swollen eyes, then she returned to the table and took up her pen.

"What shall I write?" she asked him. "Shall I pour out the effusions of a truly devoted heart?" The pen moved steadily across the sheet. He should know that she missed him, that the children cried for him. She would beg him to send a message to Willie especially. Willie always paid attention when his father spoke. Then she would assure him again and again that she loved him. "And I hope, I try to believe that you love me, even though I have treated you badly." The end came only with the end of the sheet.

She read it through before she folded it, and sealed it with the red wafer. Once she held it against her cheek, comforting herself with the thought that Henry's very fingers would touch this paper. Then she set it aside to give to Jim Burton who was taking a letter for Teen down to the office. Through the succeeding days, she followed that letter on its way, by stage to St. Louis, by steamer up the treacherous Missouri, on, on to St. Jo, the busy rendezvous town. They told her of the throngs that must be there, and she wondered what chance her letter had of reaching Henry. Each night she prayed, piteous beseeching prayers for her husband's safety and for the safe delivery of the letter she had written, and that he might have a chance to write to her. And later, when she lay in bed, listening to the light breathing of the children, her last thoughts drifted westward following the letter to Henry.

* * *

For a week the partners lay at St. Joseph waiting for the grass to spring, a week not idle in spite of the delay. They met "Judge" Tappan from Woodburn in the incoming crowd and easily persuaded him to form the necessary fourth in their wagon-mess. They bought another yoke of oxen, and chose their own place for crossing the river. And they looked over the various companies that they might join for the trip across the plains.

For some reason, the Peoria Company, with which they were camped, did not appeal. They hesitated between the Alton Company, filled with neighbors and friends, and the compact organization headed by Dr. Knapp. A rainy evening, which compelled them

to take shelter in their wagons, offered an opportunity for discussion. The four lounged on their beds, a lantern swinging from a wagon-bow above their heads, with the patter and swish of the rain on the wagon sheet a background for their talk. As prospective members of the Jerseyville Company, they would have been given by Dr. Knapp a copy of the resolutions which all who joined the company must sign. One of them may have read it aloud, holding it up near the lantern for better sight:

"*Resolved,* That we the subscribers, members of the 'GREEN AND JERSEY COUNTY COMPANY' of emigrants to California, now rendezvoused at St. Joseph; in view of the long and difficult journey before us, are satisfied that our own interests require for the purpose of safety, convenience, good feeling, and what is of the utmost importance, the prevention of unnecessary delay, the adoption of strict rules and regulations to govern us during our passage: and we do by our signatures to this resolution, pledge ourselves each to the other, that we will abide by all the rules and regulations that may be made by a vote of a majority of the company, for its regulations during our passage; that we will manfully assist and uphold any authorized officer in his exertions to strictly enforce all such rules and regulations as may be made. And further, in case any members of the company, by loss of oxen or mules, by breaking of wagon, robbery by the Indians, or in fact from any cause whatever beyond their control, are deprived of the ability to proceed with the company in the usual manner, we pledge ourselves never to desert them, but from our own resources and means to support and assist them to get through to Sutter's Fort, and in fact, we pledge ourselves to stand by each other, under any justifiable circumstance to the death."

Here was an earnest of discipline and order, and, if all were to get through, concerted action would be necessary. It would take weighty considerations to overbalance the desire to travel with the old acquaintances from Alton, and to resist the temptation to take at face value boastful talk of records to be broken. But a faint fore-

shadowing of dissensions to come may have turned the scale and thrown the decision to the organization which presented a method seeming to augur both safety and speed. Be that as it may, before the partners had turned in for the night they had determined to go out with the Jerseyville men. In the morning Henry found time to write his last letter from St. Joseph:

CAMP 6 MILES NORTH S^{T} JOSEPH
2 MAY 1849—

DEAR MARY

Your truly acceptable letter of 18th was rec^{d} the same day my last was mailed—Tom went down to the office & mailed our letters and brought up yours—When he came up to the camp it was just dark, and he called & said "Page & Hank letters"—You cannot think how my heart jumped, for I was fearful that we might leave before a letter could reach us—When so far absent from my loved ones, and when an unexpected letter came to hand, I cannot tell the unbounded joy that filled my heart, at the reception of your letter—Under date of Sat. 28 Ap^{l}—I find written in my mem. book, thus, "Rec^{d} this eve a letter from wife—My heart bounded "for joy, as I took it in my hand, and O how much more, when I had "the pleasure of reading the lines penned by that dearest & best of wives "—29th Sun. Henry Tappan came on to day & comes into our mess,— "this makes it very pleasant for us—We needed another & could not have "any one more suitable—We now go full handed & with good cheer— "Every thing around camp to-day has been still & orderly—Thought "much of wife & children—Saw D^{r} Knap & Mr H. Goodrich of Jersey- "ville—30th Ap^{l} Mon. Have just read wife letter for the third time and "although dated only one week after we left, find it a great consolation "to have it—The longer I am away from wife & children, the more I "find I love them, & think of them with tenderer feelings—Am fearful "that Willie will cause wife much trouble"

Thus much have I copied, leaving out smaller matters, as you desired —We left our former camp & came to this place to cross the river—The ferry was so crowded in town & it was so dusty that we came up here to cross—Will not get across to-day, there are so many teams in ahead of us—Last night we had the first rain we have had, since we left Wood- burn, and it is much warmer & is now this afternoon thundering, &

looks much like rain—We need it much—We had a very heavy shower last night, but every thing was dry & comfortable in our wagon—We have every think arranged finely—& the only thing that is wanting, is the strips of pine, on which you wrote "Mary follows you with good wishes & prayers"—These strips on the bows were accidentally broke off, on the boat & Hank has put others in their place—We have bought another good yoke of oxen, five years old, which fitts us out finely, for a team—

I suppose dear wife, you must give up the idea, of expecting to see me this fall for I have concluded, it is best to go on—You & the friends no doubt hear a great many tales, about this trip, that is not true—The highest number I have heard named, by those here, that will go out, is 15.000 & I realy think that 12.000 will count all, but still I may be mistaken—We probably will not know the exact number, for we will be in the crowd ourselves—but you may be able to learn something definite, from the papers, after we have left—And if the number of that cross the river is given, you may safely calculate, that four to each team will *more than* cover the number going out—We may be troubled some for feed, but still hope to get through—No doubt but that we shall go out with the Jerseyville & Green C° emigrants—After we have all crossed the river, a company will then be formed & officers elected—

You ask "what can I write about"—In answer I would say, write just as you would talk to your Page'y—Not only "pour out the effusions of a truly devoted heart" but tell every little thing that has occurred to give you joy or sorrow—Every thing especially about your own dear self & those two dear ones Tinta & Willie—I am sorry, *very* sorry that we are destined to so long a separation—but still has it not been undertaken for the best? It is very heard for me to leave you, & very hard to stay away and still harder to think, that I may be away so long—Although we may be destined, always to live plain & poor, yet still I think that I ought to make all the endavors, I can, to place that dear wife & family of mine, if I can, above want—I may, & hope, & believe that I shall be successful, & now that we have decided on such a course, had I not better persever & see if I can do any thing—If we only get across the plains & I am spared, I have not fear of the result———I did not think Tinta & Willie would feel my absence so much as you say they do—Time will lessen their

trouble on that score, but I *do not* believe that time will have any such effect on you—Your love is sure & steadfast, for I feel that I have by my bad course, given you occasion, often, to lessen your love for me—But thanks, to the constancy of your love for me, which I feel assured will never abate, while we both live—Can I say anything to add to the confidence you have, in my love for you? All, if not more, than mortals ought, do I love the dear wife of my heart—Your constancy, kindness, love, and long suffering towards me, will ever be remembered, and add much to the joy of your husband, during his long absence—It is to me, what the magnet is to the mariner, my guide, director & constant companion—During the twenty four hours of each day, as it passes, do I think much more & more continually of you, than if I was with you—Why this is so, I cannot say. I may be a little love-sick, home-sick, wife-sick or what not—my thoughts morning & night espicially dwell upon you——There has been some cases of the cholera on the river, and in S^{t} Jo—Most of the cases in S^{t} Jo have been among the inhabitants—I have heard of but one death among the emigrants. As far as I have seen, I never knew a more healthy set of men, in my life—And those only are sick, who are imprudent, drunken &c &c—If one uses common prudence & usual care, I dont think we need apprehend, any unusual sickness in crossing the plains—The cholera I dont believe will follow us—And remember that the Doctors are more numerously represented among the Emigrants, in proportion to their number among the inhabitants of the country, than any other part of community—Every company will have one or more—

I may not have another opportunity to write you dear wife, from this neighbourhood, before we leave—If I do, I shall surely improve it—We expect to cross the river, to night or in the morning; and will in a day or two, move on, as we can find grass—till our corn is all fed out—then move ahead as fast as we can—Now dear Mary I must bid you another adieu,—another link that holds me to you, is about to be broke—that of civilization—When we cross the river, we are among the Indians, & then our camp duty begins in earnest—Your prayers, I am sure w[ill] ascend with mine, that I may be preserved & safely returned to the loved ones I have left behind me—God grant that such may be the case—

Tom wishes me to say, he wrote yesterday—Hank writes to-day—There

has been no card-playing by H. T. or Judge, or in our wagon—Hope they will not bring them out—My health is very good—regular in my habits—no sign of the chills—We have to eat—good corn-bread, buiscuit, crackers—pork & ham—beans & applesauce—Tell Corinth that the butter she gave us still holds out—Tell Mother the soap answers first rate—though we have not yet washed any of our clothes—

Wont Willie be a good boy—so that mama can write to papa, that Willie is a good boy—Mama must write all about Willie—

Your next letter I suppose will be addressed to San Francisco, and you must write just when & as often as you wish & we will get them all when we get there—be sure & have some there by that time—We will be some five months in crossing the plains & will write every chance we can send in—Love to all—Goodbye—Goodbye dear wife

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN COUNTY
ILLINOIS

Postage 10¢

CHAPTER V

The Great Emigration

THE partners made a wise choice in leaving the St. Joseph ferry and finding their own route across the river outside the town, for the outfits which stayed by the usual crossing had delays which must have seemed interminable, and on the far side of the river in early May they found five miles of unspeakable mud in the Missouri bottom to traverse before high solid ground could be reached. Dr. Knapp's company from Jerseyville, for all its careful organization, made the mistake of following the crowd, and although it set out on May first, it was behind Henry and Hank and Tom when they reached the trail beyond the river.

A day by day account of the movement of the Jerseyville company can be compiled from two journals kept by men who traveled with it. The first, which begins with the start from Jersey County, Illinois, and ends abruptly just after the crossing of the ferry from St. Joseph, was written by E. L. Bowman, a man of few words and little imagination, who contents himself with noting the mileage made each day, the towns passed through, and occasionally the weather.* There is little of interest to be extracted from his bald narrative, but it does serve to trace the route chosen by Dr. Knapp. Bowman left home on March 22, went through Jerseyville to Carrollton in Greene County and across to the Illinois River where he overtook the company at the Columbian Ferry. There they were delayed two days, whether by high water or a crowd on the road, Bowman does not say. Atlas and Rockport were milestones on the road, the Mississippi was ferried at Hannibal, the Salt River at Clinton, and Paris, Madison and Huntsville were passed. A mile through

* Bowman's Journal is given in full in Appendix B.

the bottom of the Chariton River Bowman noted briefly as "the worse road I ever saw in my life," but his education in bad roads was only beginning. At Grand River on April seventeenth and eighteenth they ran into snow. Carrollton, Missouri, is the next recognizable point, and Richmond, where they danced a cotillion in the evening, then Plattsburg and a final arrival at St. Joseph on the twenty-seventh of April, three days after Henry Page had landed there with the lost ox.

At this juncture, Joseph Hackney joined the Jerseyville Company and became a far more interesting scribe. At the top of the first of some blank leaves torn from an old ledger, he printed carefully the word JOURNAL as a beginning for his account of the march:

JOURNAL

May 1

Left camp at two o'clock and moved to the f[erry] not much chance to cross till to morrow

[May] 2

Lay by at the ferry all day waiting for our turn and by hard squessing got over by ten o'clock that night the rest of the teams came over before no[on]

[May] 3

We are at last in the Indian ter[ritory] and must bid adieu to civilized [country for] many a day to come and perhaps [forever] yoked up and went 5 miles [over a very] bad road camped at noon found water plenty grass thin

[May] 4

Rained all night but [clear this morning] goodrich started home to day [not liking] the sample of the trip over the ro[ads] as we had it last night Went 3 miles rain last night made the roads so [muddy] that we were forced to stop had a better camp than the one we left

[May] 5

Lay by and grased the oxen nothing doing in camp but shooting at a mark and fixing up

[May] 6

Made six miles over a rough broken country roads still muddy and it still looks like rain we intend to keep on a few miles each day till the grass is grown enough for the cattel to go ahead on it is a growing fine at present but will not do yet to push the teams on crabb and chapman came up ous to day wrote a letter to bill to day it will be my last chance to send a letter home for some time

[May] 7

Drove 12 miles country very broken had the bad luck to break a king bolt on the road passed a number of indians huts inhabited by the iowas theas weare the nastyest indians i ever saw crossed wolf creek in the after noon one of the teams staled in the creek after a good deal of troble got acrost went one mile and camped grass and water good wood scarce drove the team myself to day for the first time weather pleasant three more teams joined the company to day two of them wear from Jersey county and the other was from Macoupin

[May] 8

Still keep a moving [though] slowly traveled 6 miles over a delight [ful prairie which] is the finest land i ever saw h[illy countr]y and thickly coated with grass [everything looks] beautyful we passed the indian [agency at] ten o'clock they have fine farms but [are too in] dolent to work them the whites at the station wear a plantin corn and the indians [sitting] on the fence or a laying in the shade we passed a wagon broke down on the road to day Joe borem stoped for to help them mend it we have a fine camping ground and the best water i have drank since i left home 5 more teams joined ous to day they are from clinton county Illinois we have 11 wagons with us now

The wagon from Macoupin County, that joined the train on May seventh, was of course that of the four men from Woodburn.

The road they had been traveling thus far led through the broken country that in a prairie land borders all river bottoms. The oxen alternately struggled up the ridges or floundered in the springtime mud which filled the gullies. The little hills pressed close on either

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SAN JOSE, CALIF.

CROSSED THE BIG BLUE AT NINE O'CLOCK

WE ARE NOW A-FOLLOWING UP THE VALLEY OF THE LITTLE BLUE

THE FAMOUS CROSSING OF THE SOUTH PLATTE, "A MILE WIDE AND A FOOT DEEP"

THE STRANGE SHALLOW RIVER MEANDERING AMONG ITS ISLETS

hand and when the teams rounded the top of some higher place, nothing could be seen ahead but more of the same up and down work.

Just beyond what is now Troy, Kansas, they passed the Iowa and Sac Mission School, which had been established twelve years before. They looked with astonishment at the fine Mission House of brick and the farm of one hundred and fifteen acres. Here was located the agency for those Indians of whom Hackney spoke with such contempt, and here a mail service was maintained back to St. Joseph. In camp that evening, many men took advantage of what might be the last chance to send letters, and Henry Page was among the writers. There was a difference in his account of the crossing of the river, due to the fact that the bluffs of the far side, at the point where he and his partners had ferried over, were at the river's edge and high land could be reached at once. Assistance up the steep grade for loaded teams was evidently organized. The Macoupin wagon had gained a day at the start and had shortened their road by some thirteen miles:

CAMP 30 MILES FROM S^{T} JOSEPH
8TH MAY 1849

DEAR MARY

We left the Missouri River the day but one after I wrote you, and as we have a chance to send to the Indian Agency, (5 miles back I improve the opportunity—I dont know that I can give you much news, but knowing your anxiety to hear, once more from your dear husband, before he launches out onto the boundless Prairie, I could not let the chance pass by—

Extracts

"3 May Tues. Judge gone to town to mail letters and to see D^{r} Knapp—Judge ret^{d} & brought another letter from wife dated 23 Ap^{l}—right glad to hear—Also a letter from D^{r} Grinsted giving us a good account of our wives & children—4 May Fri. Crossed the river early this morning—, With the help of 17 yoke Oxen went up the bluffs—some 300 ft high & very steep—Travelled about 6 miles, over a fine rolling Praire & camped at a small grove of timber, with a fine spring—Heard of D^{r} Knapp C^{o}

behind us—Rained very hard last night & found the roads very muddy & much cut up—The road as distinct as the large roads in the states—Quite cold—5 May Sat. moved on 3 miles over a very broken prarie, camped with 6 teams, on a high hill, at the foot of which a fine spring of water was found—but no water for the cattle—Met 8 Indians of the Iowa tribe—The oldest appeared to be a cheif—had his bow & arrows—one had a spear—no fire arms—four of them squaws—All well dressed in Indian custome & well mounted on good ponies—6 May Sun—On guard last night from one to 3 oclock—cold raw wind from the south—Passed yesterday Musqueto creek, a small, rapid, clear stream—Saw at the creek an Indian coffin in an oak tree, apparently much decayed—about 15 ft. from the ground—Moved on 4 miles to Wolf Creek on account of water for our cattle—Passed some Indian lodges, made of flags—wove similar to a straw carpet—Saw a large number of Indians to day, of all ages"—

I find it rather dry work, making extracts from my Journal & will perhaps be able to tell what happened to us, in a better way, by laying aside the same, and write from memory—We lay at our encampment all day yesterday (Mon) & at night D^{r} Knapp & C^{o} (ten wagons) drove up to our camp—We were, I can assure you very glad to see him, for he has some very fine men in his C^{o}—Among them, is Ja^{s} Whitlock of Green C^{o}, who is well acquainted with Father & knew your uncle John —Robert Knapp & Sam^{l} Goodrich of Jerseyville are also with the C^{o}—Henry Goodrich took the back track at S^{t} Jo & has gone back to his wife —This morning we started & came to this place—We have in our Company sixteen wagons & will have 3 or 4 more at the least—We shall keep on with them, and probably will form a regular organised C^{o} in a few days—At present D^{r} Knapp by consent acts as captain—The grass on the Praire is very good & our cattle fill themselves & are doing well—We are to-night camped on a beautiful prarie, at a fine spring; with good water for our cattle—Brought wood for cooking some 1½ miles—The appearance of the country has very much altered to-day—Long rolls or swells in the prarie, with fine springs in every large hollow, but timber only on the abrupt banks & not enough of that on ten thousand acres, if all good, to fence 40 acres—We have to-day turned our course westward—As near as we can find out, there are some four

hundred teams ahead of us—And if we organise soon, we shall roll along & likely pass many of them—The Alton C° is, we think one hundred miles ahead of us—They started early, carrying corn with them, with the detirmination to be the forward train—We shall not see them probably this side of the mountains—We are now fairly on our way & shall likely move every day that it is practicable—Sundays excepted, when we shall if possible lay by—

You might query, dear wife, how I like the camp life—Well I can truly say that I do not mislike it, but on the contrary am much pleased with it thus far—Hank & self have done most of the cooking, and have succeeded thus far, admirably—The great difficulty we find, is to cook enough—All of us have most voracious appetites, and feel, as Judge says, like eating up the plates & forks—But truly we get along finely—We bought to-day a ponie of the Sioux indians—gave 25$ for him. It is almost necessary to have one, to keep our feet dry, when after the oxen in the dew—& for other purposes—We have in our train about 68 yoke cattle & 10 mules, ponies & horses—

Since I wrote the above the oxen have been drove in by the guard & I stoped to help tie them to their stakes—Jack & Jerry, are very tractable & easily caught & handled—We have a guard of four detailed every day who by turns watch the cattle day & night when we are in camp—Our cattle are never turned out un[less] they have a guard with them—

You would be amused, wifey, if you could look in upon our camp—All busy & the way the jokes are bandied about, is laughable—I stop every now & then, as I write to laugh as some saying, strikes upon my ear—

You need not be alarmed any more, about the cholera—For it has entirely been left behind us & there is not a man in camp, that is the least effected—All straight as a shingle—D[r] Knapp says his C° have been & are as healthy as men ever were—so dont be troubled about the cholera any more—We are as healthy as ever—I myself am very well indeed—

I may not have another chance to write you, for a very long time, but dear Mary, remember that you are still are dear, very dear, to me—Absence does not cure my love for you and the dear children, Tinta & Willie, I love you more than ever—I look back with pleasure upon our

life as husband & wife, and do not & cannot think, only, of the many pleasant hours we have passed together—But when I look forward to our long separation, my heart feels in unison with yours. Feel mournful & sorrowful that we are compelled to separate for a season—I hope and trust that it will be only for a season—Till you next hear from me, do not imagine any thing evil has happened to me—We are & shall not be, in any danger of our lives from the Indians—The only trouble is to keep them, from stealing—but they will not trouble us, so much as they will the mule trains—They will steal every mule (first page), horse & oxen they can—Once more I must say goodbye dear wife—

Dont forget to give my best love to all the family—Tell D[r] Grinsted that we were on the move when his letter came to hand & I have only time to write this—I hope the children will soon not trouble you so much—Kiss them for me—& O that I could kiss you & them myself—Trust that God will spare us till I return & that we shall meet to separate no more, till death shall separate us, is the prayer of your

devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

(in pencil)

I have obtained a copy of our By Laws & send the same, for you all

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C[O]
ILLINOIS
postage 10¢

Henry's confident prediction in regard to the cholera was destined not to be fulfilled. Although his own train was but lightly afflicted, their comparative immunity was due to the fact that they were in advance of the marching plague. It wrought great havoc at the rendezvous camps of St. Joseph and Independence, among those who were late in setting out, mowing down the emigrants who had been on the river steamers in great numbers. It touched the inhabitants of both places rather more lightly, but it followed the wagon trains to the mountains beyond Fort Laramie, and the emigrants, being unprepared to fight it, died like flies. Bancroft estimates that five

thousand of them perished or, approximately, one out of every five, for the ferry records of St. Joseph, Independence and Kane's Landing at the Council Bluffs show that 27,000 men took the trail that year.

When the Constitution and the By Laws which Henry had enclosed were formally adopted at a meeting of the company held on May ninth, these Argonauts of '49 were taking over an already well-established custom of the trail. Groups of wagons traveling together had been in the habit of setting up some form of government, sometimes a combination of military and civil command with a required military drill, and a compact order of march, sometimes merely civil in character. Certain groups completed their organization at the rendezvous, but the more usual proceeding was to wait as Dr. Knapp's company had done until they were out of the jurisdiction of the United States law. These constitutions had certain characteristics in common. The tenure of office was usually brief, and offenses against the laws were divided into civil, or breaches of discipline, and criminal, or breaches of law, and a jury trial was always provided for the criminal offender. In all these constitutions, which are still extant, no provision can be found for punishment of defection. Apparently the hardy pioneers figured that the consequences of this crime would be penalty enough.

The constitution which Dr. Knapp presented for adoption began with a sentence which faintly echoed the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States, familiar to every member of the company from his schooldays.

"We, the members of the Green and Jersey County Company of Emigrants to California, for the purpose of effectually protecting our persons and property, and as the best means of ensuring an expeditious and easy journey do ordain and establish the following constitution":*

Five officers were set up, a Captain and Assistant Captain, each elected to serve twenty days, a Treasurer and Secretary also elected

* The full text of Constitution and By-Laws is given in Appendix C.

but for a term of four months, and an Officer of the Guard appointed for each day. Authority to inflict penalties for civil offenses was vested in the Captain, but such penalties to be laid upon members of the Company were limited to "extra or additional guard or other duties to which they are liable." The constitution might be amended at any time by a vote of two thirds of the company. At the ensuing election, the offices were evidently divided among the counties represented in the company, for the Captain was from Jersey County, his assistant from Clinton, and the Treasurer from Macoupin.

The By Laws had an introduction of their own: "We, citizens and inhabitants of the United States, and members of the Green and Jersey County Company of Emigrants to California; about starting on a journey through a territory where the laws of our common country do not extend their protection, deem it necessary, for the preservation of our rights, to establish certain wholesome rules and regulations. We, therefore, having first organized a constitution of government, for ourselves, do now proceed to enact and ordain the following laws; and in so doing we disclaim all desire or intention of violating or treating with disrespect, the laws of our country."

In the first section there was a description of the method of laying a complaint before the company, and regulations governing a jury trial. A jury of five was to be chosen by lot from all the names of the company save those of the parties, witnesses, and the messmates of the accused, and a majority of this jury was to render the decision. An appeal was permitted to the whole company, but a two thirds vote taken by ballot was required to set aside a jury's verdict. A member who threatened the life of another was to be expelled from the company, supplied with enough provisions from his mess to carry him to the nearest settlement, and ordered to leave within an hour or be shot on sight. Murder was punishable by death in the form of shooting by a rank of twelve men, but the verdict of the jury must be unanimous. If the first jury disagreed, a second and third could be chosen, but three disagreements amounted to an acquittal.

Gambling was forbidden. No one might carry a loaded gun or pistol in a wagon. The Sabbath day whenever "practicable and safe for the Company" was to be "a day of rest to man and beast." A Pioneer Corps of twelve men taken one from each mess in order, was set up to repair roads, build bridges, or do any other work necessary to facilitate the progress of the train. The wagons were numbered from one upwards and divided into messes of four each, and one mess moved from the front of the train to the rear three times daily. This allowed all to share equally in the burden of trail-breaking or the comfort of freedom from dust to be found in the first place. One man from each of these messes in order served on the guard of nine men who, in three reliefs, were to watch over the cattle night and day. And finally the by laws provided that, in event of a death on the way, the dead man's property should be carried through to California, and there sold at auction, the proceeds of the sale to be turned over to his nearest relatives for remittance to the heirs. If he had no relations in the train, the company might appoint administrators to carry out the disposal under bond.

With the tenth of May, the pace of the train quickened and, while some of the increased speed may have been due to the fact that they had now climbed out of the broken country on to the High Plains, some may undoubtedly also be traced to the quick concerted action by the Pioneers which was now possible whenever they met any obstacles, and to the time saved by the cattle guard that might have been wasted in searching for strays. Hackney's narrative indicates that the party were already getting into the swing of things:

[May] 9

Drove 6 miles and camped on the prarie the country about the same as yesterday no wood water and grass fine we camped early as our company was to be organized a meeting was called and Dr Knapp appointed chairman after the constitution and by Laws wear read an adopted the company went into an election for officers Dr Knapp was elected captain for twenty days Wm Maxey was elected second captain Wm Rockwe[ll] for Secretary and henry Tappan treasurer wich com-

pleats the organisation of the company we will now push off for good and any ox train that gets ahead of us will have to travele saw an ox that had give out and had been left behind the first one that i have seen wound up for the day by dancing a stag dance and a long dissucion about the new regulations adopted this day

[May] 10

Made 12 miles over a fine prarie. Nothing occured worth recording the grass is coming on finely had to double teams through a coupel of mud holes we have plenty of wood and water at this camp articals that have been hard to find for the last few days we can hear nothing from the Jersey and green county teams ahead of us and have give up hopes of overtakeing them we heard from peater Perrine to day and expect him in to night

[May] 11

Lay by most of the day as one of our men was not expected to live his name was James Whitlock from Jersey county he died about noon after the sad duty of burying his remains we struck our campe and moved on with heavy hearts we kept on till ten o'clock at night and camped on the prarie without wood or water distance 10 miles the five teams from clinton co that joined ous at the mission requested permission to withdraw from the company their request was granted and they moved off searved as officer of the guard this day

[May] 12

left this morne and went 3 miles to wood & water got breckfast and again yoked up and traveled 22 miles no wood at this camp luckily we took some wood from wear we got breakfast enough to cook supper but will have to move off before breackfast we have had fine roads all day over a level prapie and as rich land as ever was seen saw a man to day that has been to fort Larime a number of times he says that the road from hear thear is as good as we have come over to day the distance thear is seven hundred and fifty miles we will have to go a few miles to morrow to get wood we have a bad creek to cross before we can get wood

[May] 13

Went 1 mile and lay by for the rest of the day we crossed the Nemahah and camped on its bank it is a bad place to cross haven very steep banks on both sides done my Washing and then went a fishing had fishermans luck so wrote a letter to day we are expection to meet at a company of fur traders in a few days going to the states and will have a nother chance to send letter back home had an election this evening for second captain to fill the vacancy caused by the withdrawal of capt Maxey from the company E M Bowers was elected by the unanimous vote of the company It rained all night

At this second meeting of the company, the official title was evidently changed to the Jersey County Company, for the withdrawal of the Clinton men and failure to overtake the wagons from Greene County had given the Jersey men the predominance.

As the Great Emigration moved along, it met, now and then, some of the older travelers of the trail, the "Rocky Mountain Men," hunters and trappers who roamed back and forth, rough looking men, said Tamsen Donner in 1845, but glad to give information about the trail and the number of wagons ahead. One such had overtaken the Jersey Company on the twelfth of May, Michel Robidoux, the younger brother of the founder of St. Joseph, gray-haired but still handsome. He knew the country ahead, every stick and clod of it, for he made his living trading out from Fort Laramie with a Conestoga wagon loaded with calico, beads, mirrors and trinkets for the Indians, to exchange for furs and buffalo hides. In this he was acting as factor for the American Fur Company founded by John Jacob Astor, but at this time controlled by his father, Joseph Robidoux the elder. There were posts up the various branches of the Missouri, and down the Columbia to the Pacific, where the colony of Astoria was maintained as a base for trade with China. There was a fur market in St. Louis, and hundreds of "keelboats" and "mackinaws" on the inland rivers, and packmules on the trails carrying the skins to market. Michel was in his way to meet a train

of mules, and, true to the custom of the road, he notified the emigrants of a chance to send back mail.

To note the silences in Henry's letters is illuminating. Nothing is said that would in any way frighten Mary. No mention was made of the death of Captain James Whitlock, friend of Justus and John Rider, and, while reassuring generalizations were no longer possible in regard to the health of the emigrants, much stress was laid on his own good condition:

ON THE BANKS OF BIG NEMAHAH
SUNDAY AFTERNOON 13 MAY 1849—

DEAREST & BEST OF WIVES

D[r] Knapp (who is our Captain) tolds us that, Mr. Robodoux a fur trader, who lives at Fort Laramie (600 miles ahead), passed our train yesterday on his way west, to meet his train of pack mules, coming in with furs—and that we that wished, had better write, and when we met the train, we could send our letter to be mailed at S[t] Jo. And as our letters must be ready when we met the train, I take this day of rest, to write my dear wife, another letter—and though I may carry it three or four days & not be able to add a word to what I now write, for want of time, I know you will receive & read it with pleasure—It was with joy that I heard of this opportunity, and now I set in the wagon, to have a long chit-chat with wifey, who is I fancy at this hour, in the church listening to the preached word of God—Dont you dear Mary love once more to look upon the lines traced by the hand of your dear absent husband? Yes I know your heart bounds with joy as you read this very line, to think that you can again hear from your Henry, and know that his health is very good, & with a cheerful heart & excellent spirit, delights to talk to his own Mary—I dont mean that I am glad to be away from you —no—no—far from it, but that it gives me great pleasure to write, hoping that this very sheet of paper will be in your hands, & this very place kissed by your lips, which now I press to my own—Is not this a delightful thought to you, for it is to me—But when I think of your "swelling heart, which yields to greif, to which you have hitherto been a stranger," there is truly dear Mary, "in my bosom a response—and feelings equal to your own"—let this comfort you dear wife, in my absence, to know that our hearts do truly beat in unison, & that we are of one heart

& one mind—And when you write let all the thoughts & feelings which take up their abode in your heart, be poured out freely & without measure into the ears of your dear husband—It would be delightful to me to read a letter from you, filled up with every day occupation & talk & troubles & joys of mine wife—Dont spare time or stint your paper when you decide it is the proper time to write me at San Francisco—W^{m} can put you in possession of the time of the departure of the mailes, and as you hear from us (if we are able to send letters) & learn through the papers of the progress of the Emigrants, you can write so that the first time we send to the P.O. in San F. I shall be sure to have one or more letter from you—For fear, a letter might micarry, or be delayed dont delay to long, but rather let me have four or five letters, than none—Just think that I shall literally devour them and be almost crazy for news from you. Therefore let your motto be like that of mine, write, write, write—When and after you send the first letter, dont let a mail (once a month only) leave the Atlantic shore of the U. S. without it carries a letter to your devoted husband—And remember, that not an apportunity will pass, that I will not improve to write you, on the route, & when through will write every month—If you do not receive letters often, think only, that I could not send, and as far as you can, imagine that I am well & in good cheer—My health is excellent, my habits regular, my appetite good &c &c—All right in this respect with me—

I wrote you on the 8" May, which I hope has come to hand—Since then we have united with the Jersey C° Boys & formed a C° under the name of the Jersey County Company—We have not as yet seen the Green County men—At present our C° comprises thirteen teams, with forty three men—The bye-laws, I sent you in my last have been altered some, & may be altered more—When we left our encampment on the morning of 9th and came out upon the high rolls of the prarie, a grand sight burst upon our view. Seventy-five wagons were in sight & all moving over a beautiful prarie—On 10th we camped on a small creek, called Turkey Creek—Left this on the afternoon of the 11th at 4 oclock & travelled till 9 & camped without wood or water—Next morning (12th) at sunrise, lift & came on 2 miles to breakfast & turned out the cattle to graze—After a stop of two hours, rolled on to within two miles of this place—We hoped in the morning to have been able to reach the creek before

night, but was compelled to stop, after sun down, where we had good grass & water—and on this morning before sunrise started forward & crossed this creek & immediately camped on the west banks of the same, where we had wood, water & feed—We are now 80 miles from S[t] Jo.—50 miles ahead is the Big Blue River—60 miles we reach the Independence trail—600 miles to Fort Laramie—We have now traveled far enough west, to reach the high prarie, or the plains, as it is called—The appearance of this country, from this to Fort Laramie, is similar to that in which we now are—It is different from what I thought it was—A high, dry, fertile prarie, without timber, except on the immediate banks of the creeks—and then, only where the banks are very steep & broken—It is a curious sight to come upon a creek & for miles & miles not find ten trees on its banks—the grass growing down to the waters edge—In other places you will find a very narrow skirt of trees on one bank, and very rarely on both banks—Where the bottom lands come down to the creeks it is all grass & the trees are found only on the steep, bluff banks, where grass does not grow—It is a beautiful country to look upon & we have better roads than I ever found in Illinois most of the time on the high dividing ridges, between the water courses—The water most generally decending both ways from the road—Except at the crossing of the creeks, we have to leave the travelled road for a mile or more to find water & wood—This will explain why we have & will often camp, without wood—for if we find good grass & water, we do not take the troubled every night to leave the trail for wood—On this account we generally, carry a little dry wood in our wagon for a pinch & are thus able to have the luxury of a warm cup of coffee, with our cold bread & meat—Our practice is first to look for a good place for the cattle & then think of our own convenience—if both can be combined so much the better—Our team works well & we have a load only of about 2300 lbs for 4 yoke of oxen—which of course is daily growing lighter—

I wrote you in my last that Cha[s] Goodrich, was with us—it is a mistake I should have said Silas Goodrich—Hanck has something of a cold, with that exception, all our Mess are well—The health of all the Emigrants we hear from or see, is excellent, & from all appearances you need not apprehend, that any unusual sickness will visit us—

When we are daily on the move our labors are enough to keep us

hungry, & make us all tired at night—In the morning we are awaked by the night watch, at the first break of day, & in ten minnits all are astir —By sunrise breakfast is under way & after all is [clea]red off, the oxen are drove in, yoked & off we roll—We travel [till] about noon, stop where there is water, for an hour or so, then on, till we make our camping place—which is some nights later than others—varying from three oclock to sun down—When we stop early enough, for the cattle to fill themselves before night, comes upon us, we larriet (tie with long ropes to stakes) them till just at daylight when they are turned loose, till we are ready to start—If we are late in stoping, we herd the cattle out all night —At all times night & day, when not under way, there is a guard of three men, with the cattle—who are relieved every three hours during th[e] twenty four hours, so that each three men are on watch three hours, and off watch six hours—This takes nine men, besides the captain of the guard for each 24 hours—The captain of the guard attends to releiving the guard night & day for 24 hours, when he is relieved by a new captain—Each man has to take his turn in being guard & captain of the guard, before they can call him the second time—Every fourth day, I am called upon for this duty—One at a time, is always on duty from our wagon—My 24 hours ending this morning & Tom is on duty to day—As this is all voluntary, it goes off very pleasant—& as each man is interested in keeping all straight, every thing has at yet been done right —For the past few days & for the future we shall make all the progress we can—The grass is excellent, & we shall measure off the miles quite fast—at the rate of 100 miles at the least per week—We shall no doubt, when we come across the right men & teams, make additions to our Company, so as to increase the number of wagons to 20 or 25—This will make our camp duties lighter—but rather than not have men of the right stripe, we had rather do a little more duty—The roads are dusty & dry —The weather warm—with good breezes through the day & heavy dews & cool nights—we expect cool nights for we are fast rising, onto the high grounds of the plains—

Well Mary this sheet is almost full & I must soon close—My best love to all the dear relatives—And now for a word to Tinta & Willie—Does Tinta remember that God sees & knows all that she says & does—Love & mind your mama—And you Willie must do just as mama says, &

remember that he loves his children the most when, they are good—Once more dear Mary a sweet, good, bye—May God bless & comfort & direct you—Pray for & teach the children to pray for their papa—Let our prayers united ascend to the throne of grace, for our mutual welfare, and that we may be spared to meet again in this hour—

Your dearest
HENRY

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}
ILLINOIS
to be mailed at S^{t} Joseph ——— } Postage 10¢

They must have missed connection with the American Fur Company's pack train, or the train must have been greatly delayed, for Henry carried that letter for eight days before the chance came to mail it.

They were entering now on a season when roads would be better and game was plentiful. Antelope, elk and deer abounded, and the hunting of them was not only a pleasure to Hank and Tom, but a necessity as well. The emigrant train must be self-supporting for four months or more, and there were regions ahead where the food in their wagon would be the only possible resource. Hunts were organized which frequently led the men as far as twenty miles off the road, as Hackney notes in the continuation of his journal:

[May] 14

Traveled 20 miles over a high rolling prarie all the stream weare heavily timbered i seen some of the finest sights to day i ever saw when we raised on the ridges we could see the country for miles around all of the streams with theare heavy body of timber and as far as the eye could reach the wagons could be seen with their white tops winding along the road it was a sight worth comin this far to see we saw 5 antelope to day this is the first game that we have seen since we started greaser and Jordan started after them and followed them for some time bute could

not get with shot of them they did not get in camp till some time after dark found a young calf on the road to day

1849
May 15

Left camp at 8 o'clock traveled over a fine prarie no timber to be seen except in the creeke bottoms crossed two creeks on the route to day both had bad places to cross nothing of importance said or done to day camped for the night within one mile of the big blue grass thin wood and water plenty Jim bowman killed nothing traveled 20 miles.

[May] 16

Traveled 15 miles roads first rate crossed the big blue at nine o'clock this is a beautiful stream about 50 yards wide and from 2 to three feet in depth we had a devil of a time getting our team over our leaders got turned aroung and all tangled up i had to plunge in and get wet all over got them stratened out at last and came through theare was two graves on the bank of the stream both made this year traveled on till two o'clock when we came to the place where the independence and St Joesph road joined a few miles further we crossed a small creeke we filled our keg and put wood in our wagons and went 2 miles out on the prarie and camped two more wagons joined our train to day thear is a lady and child with one of them we are a gettin along finely now we have had fine roads for the last week past we have past more than 200 wagons since last friday the platt river is 120 miles from this camp we will get thear in a week if no accident happens

1849
May 17

Traveled 19 miles roads good crossed one small creek called rogers run after a trapper that was killed by the Indians on it a man that was camped hear told me that over three hundred wagons had crossed hear before us to day and thear was one hundred at least in sight behind us i saw three graves on our route to day we have passed about a dozen since we left St Joseph we took in wood and water at rogers run and went one mile out on the prarie and camped.

[May] 18

Made 17 miles country very broken went a hunting today saw no game we crossed the Pawnee trail this morning we are now in the pawnee country the most hostile tribe that we will find on our route we have now to keep a very strict guard of a night to prevent them from stealing our stock one of our men said he saw twenty indians about a mile from the road to day Bryant passed us today he is the author of a book titled what i saw in Californe he is going out with pack mules crossed littel sandy at noon came on 8 miles and camped no wood nor water brought both with us from the littel sandy looks this evening like we will have a heavy shower of rain grass poor hear

[May] 19

Traveled 18 miles country very broken it was up one hill and down another all day long we are now a follering up the valley of the littel blue wood and water very scarse on the route we crossed several dry sandy runs no water in them crossed the big sandy at ten o'clock A. M. went on after dinner five miles when we came to a camp of emigrants from bloomington who had lost one hundred head of their oxen last night by a stampead they had them corraled when they got frightened by a heavy clap of thunder and broke out they kocked down the guard and the whole heard run over him and bruised him pretty bad they had not heard from them when we passed and it is doutful wether they ever will find all of them we camped for the night on the littel blue wood and water plenty grass thin

1849

May 20

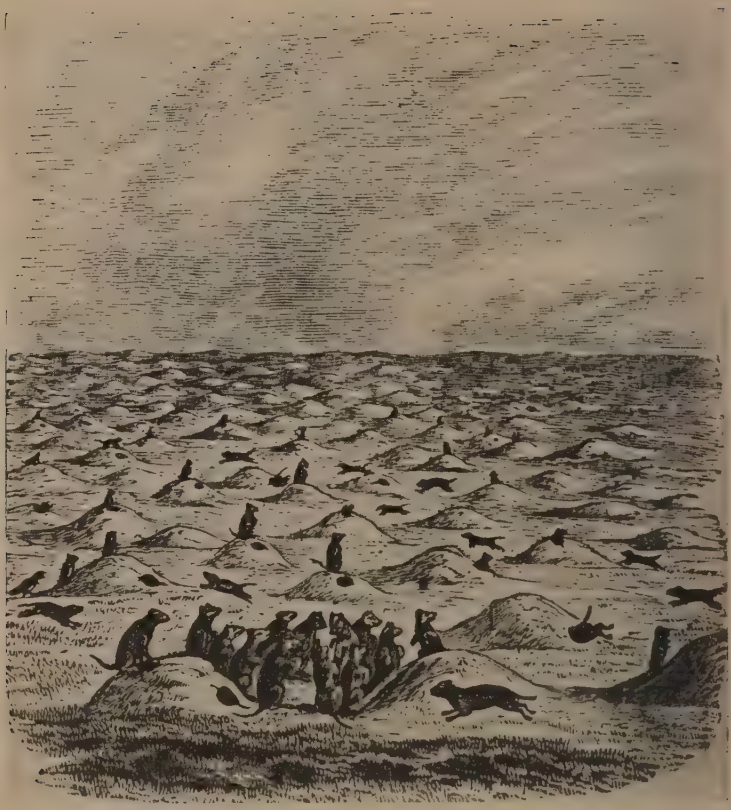
Lay by this day and over hauled our wagons we lost another man to day he had been sick ever since he joined us it was supposed he died with the cholery we burryed him on the banks of the littel blue after dark there has been over three hundred teams passed us since we lay hear two companies of the rifel men passed us this afternoon. They are on their way up to fort childes.

[May] 21

Made 20 miles to day our road lay up the valley of the blue we wear detained this morning by a rush of teams that come up just as we rolled

HUNTING BUFFALO ON THE GREAT PLAINS

(From an old print)



A TOWN OF PRAIRIE DOGS

(*From an old print*)

out when we wear strung out on the road there were wagons for 5 miles ahead and as far behind in one string we had fine roads all day with the exception of a few steep hills the weather is cold for the season but is the better for the cattel

[May] 22

Made 22 miles over a very bad road theare has been some heavy rains along hear latly the roads are bady cut up but still are not as bad as they have been we followed up the blue till 3 o'clock when we left it and struck acrost for the platt we saw a antelope to day one of the boys shot at it but missed it camped on a small creek wood and water plenty

[May] 23

Went 21 miles over a dry sandy ridge roade still heavy in places game seems to be more plenty mostly antelopes after passing a number of sand hills we came down on the valley of the platt and saw the platt river we have now commenced our trip in good earnest not turning back now we did not go down to the river but kept up the valley 5 miles and camped no wood met a company of traders from fort larime going in with 5 wagons loads of fur they report plenty of buffalo five days ahead

1849
May 24

This has been one of the worst days that we have expieranced since we left St Joseph it commenced raining soon after we left camp and rained all day we passed fort childs at noon it is situated opposite the head of grand island thear is nothing hear now but a few mud huts but thear are a going to build a regular fort thear is two company of regulars stationed hear we struck the river about a mile below the fort it is a larger stream than I expected it was it has the same muddy appearance as the missouri and resemble it in other respects thear is no wood on its banks for a long distance but all the islands are heavily timbered the river is shallow and can be forded at almost any place we took the wrong road at the fort and had to go through a number of swamps

two of the boys had a kockidown on the road today it was setteled with out any more fuss

Got into camp late our camp is on the bank of the river the river at this point is over a mile wide it is about at it highest stage at present we have hear expeiranced a small share of the hardship of a life on the plains we had no wood to cook supper with and the rain had spoiled all of the chips so we had to make a supper on hard bread the rain also began to come down in earnest and such claps of thunder and flashes of lighting as one can only hear and see on the plains altogeathur it was a cheerless time and would make one think of home distan[ce] 18 miles

The "Fort Childs" here mentioned was evidently an earlier name given to the post christened in 1849 for Stephen Watts Kearny, Colonel of the Dragoon regiment, that for years was responsible for the frontier guard against hostile Indians. Henry called it by its newer name:

FORT KEARNEY 24 MAY 1849

DEAR MARY

We have made our noon halt, within a few rods of the above Fort, and as we learn we can send letters to the states, by the regular mail, I improve the hour we stop to write—

We are on the Platte River, 300 miles from S^{t} Jo and getting along finely & all well—We struck this River last night & have come up (10 miles) to the Fort, this morning—We find from the record kept at the Fort, that 1980 teams had passed the Fort up to last night—Thus we are in advance of the great rush of Emigrants—My last letter was wrote you on the Nemaha River on or about the 13" instant, and as we were disappointed in sending the same back till the 21st you will probably not receive it, much in advance of this—But as I can give you eleven days later news of our welfare, with pleasure I am able to write this soon—We are advancing rapidly, at the rate of about 20 miles per day or say on an avarage 100 per week, for we will & have layed by every sunday—Our cattle look well & perform their work finely—In better order than when we left S^{t} Jo—The Alton C^{o} is 8 days ahead of us—Up to this point we have had wood every day, but from this for 150 or 200 miles wood is very scarce & we will have to depend upon Buffalo

Chips for fuel—But as we have 2 Bbbls Crackers & plenty of dried venison & beef, we can get along very well, if we are only able to make coffee—The Platte is very high & the banks full or we could, cross onto Grand Island & get wood—We are now 300 miles from Fort Laramie, where, if there is chance to send, I will have a letter for you—

My health is good & I stand the trip very well—Dont think that it is quite so pleasant as sitting down by my dear wife, for I can assure you dear Mary, I think much of you as we trudge along over these vast praries —It is all prarie from S[t] Jo up to this point, with a few—very few trees on the water courses—On the south side of this river (Platte) there is not a bush to be seen—all prarie—prarie—

We have passed many teams & will pass others—And again others will pass us—We have gained 3 days on the Alton C° since the 13[th]—they had wet, muddy roads, but we have dry hard roads—The weather is very cool & very favourable for our cattle—The nights are cold, with very heavy dews—A great coat is comfortable & necessary at night—To-day I have had it on & now have it on, as Hank, Tom & myself set in the wagon writing—

We have 15 wagons in our company & wish for no more—The larger trains are much delayed, crossing creeks & bad places—And as for the Indians, one has not been seen, since I last wrote you—The Sioux & Pawnees are at war—The Sioux have gone down the Platte to fight the Pawnees, & we are going up—The Indians are very much afraid of the Emigrants & keep off the trail—But we have no fear only for our stock, that they will *stampeed* (run off) or be stolen—And now that we are, within only two or three days drive of the Buffalos, we fear not, that they will be stole—

We have left the rich soil of our Praries—and are moving over a sandy, gravelly, light & cold soil—We are 1000 feet higher than you & 2000 feet higher than the Gulf of Mexico—

We are advancing with strong hearts & high courage—We are so much in advance of the great crowd, that we feel, as though our chances were pretty good, for getting our teams through to California—We work steadily—early & late—and the whole camp are united in doing their duties well & there is no complaint—Most of the mule teams are ahead of us—

Although far off on the western plains, I still remember & love that dear family of mine—I dreamed the other night I had a good kiss from you & the children—God grant that you are all well—Can I add anything, to what I said in my last, about the true love I have for you? Only, that I then poured out my whole soul to you & now you have it again & forever—Keep up good cheer dear wife & remember, that you occasionally hear from me, & I cannot expect to hear, from you for many a long month—Trust God that all will end well, and that ere long we may be permitted to clasp each other in our arms, never to be separated for a long time, as long as we live—We talk ofetn of you all & I try to imagine what my dear wife may be doing at that particular hour—Though absent, yet always present in thought, is my word to you—I know you can say the same—Do Tinta & Willie still love & think of Papa—he wishes he could see them—Be good children, love God, & love & obey your Mama is the request of your absent Papa—

Again Good bye dearest & best—

Your own

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
ILLINOIS
postage 10¢

Postmarked Fort Leavenworth
June 14

CHAPTER VI

A New World

ACCORDING to the method of reckoning which Henry had given to Mary, that is, four men to a team, the Jerseyville Company at this point was with the first eight thousand of the emigrants, the first third of the marching horde. In this advantageous position, they had the best of the grass and the choice of such replacement supplies as the traders at the various posts along the way might carry. They had every reason to go forward "with strong hearts & high courage."

Henry spoke of the cold, which made his great-coat a comfort even inside the wagon, and Hackney takes up the tale:

1849
May 25

Whew if this aint some hear it is the 25 of May and is as cold as almost any winter day the wind blows a perfect gale and made all the clothing one could pile on nesseray for ones comfort it rained all night long in perfect torrents we did not start till late this morning the boys all appeared froze up Made our breackfast on hard bread no great inducement to stay heare the rain last night had made bad roads we followed up the bank of the river it is a level road once and while crossin a small creek went 15 miles got wood from one of the islands and cooked supper it did not go so bad after making two meals on hard bread

[May] 26

Traveled 14 miles it was very cold when we started but moderated before night the roads are still very bad we camped on a grade half a mile from the river the grass is first rate no wood made out to pick up wood enough along the road to cook supper with Dr Dorseys com-

pany from New Jersey passed us this morning saw one antelope game appears scarce

[May] 27

Went 18 miles roade still heavy the appearance of the country is the same all along the river on one side and the bluff on theh other and between the two a flat level surface full of swamps and buffalo wallows as we go up the river the bluffs increas in size and have the appearance of mountains we got a sight at wolves and antelope every day but no appearance of buffolo saw a man that had his leg broke by his team runing away they wear a taking him back to fort childs had a tast of fresh meat to day Greaser killed a large fat hare made a good meal for us all

1849
May 28

Went 18 miles road some better weather plesant and a fine breeze blowing the nights are still cold met another train of fur traders they told us some great yarns they said that not half of us would ever get through do not beleave them the alton company passed them 4 days agoe they said that over 2 thousand teams had passed them before us have seen no buffolo yet Dr. Knapp went a hunting and came into camp after night with two antelope on his horse he said that he saw over two hundred during the day he divided them out amonst the company our election for company officers comes on to-morrow

Hackney evidently suspects that Dr. Knapp's zeal in obtaining a fresh meat supply for the train was not entirely disinterested, but if the good doctor thought that a little antelope properly applied would open the eyes of the company to their best interests, his knowledge of human nature was vindicated, for when the meeting was held the following day, the by-laws were changed, and the assistant captain replaced, but Dr. Knapp retained his command.

The process of choosing an officer of the guard (by the random method of taking the next man on the roll after the nine guards had

been appointed) had failed to work and a new system was introduced by which men fitted for the task were given this responsibility for a definite term:

[May] 29

Weather still pleasant went 17 miles roads first rate Jim Bowman and Jarbo went a hunting this morning have not returned yet we had an election for company officers this evening Dr. Knapp was reelected captain and Wm. Gratton from Bath, Illinois assistant captain we also elected 6 seargents to attend to the guard we had 4 men in camp las night who had got lost from their train while a hunting one of them was enock Spaulding brother to the Spauldings that live on the Illinois bottom the weather looks veary stormy i expect we will catch it before morning

And they did. One of those sudden fierce tempests of the plains swept down upon them and caused general havoc. Because of the news picked up at Fort Kearny, that the Indians had moved off to the south in pursuit of objects of their own, the cattle guard had been relaxed, and on this rough night the men on duty, knowing that no marauders were to be feared and having yet to learn the effect of the storm upon their beasts, sought what shelter they could find from the fury of the wind and rain in their tents. It was a costly mistake, although not so costly for them as for some of the neighboring trains, but it taught them a lesson. Thereafter the record shows that cattle were most carefully guarded when the weather was bad.

May 30

Laid by this day last night was one of the stormiest i ever heard tell of the rain fell in torrents and covered the ground a foot deep in water i have seen it rain as hard at home for half an hour but I never seen it pour down by buckets full f[or] 6 hours insessantly the wind also blew a perf[ect] gale, driving the rain through our tents and wagons covers like as though they had been paper theare was not much chance to sleep without you could fancy wet blankets and a torrent of water

runing under you when we got up in the mornin[g] our cattel wear scattered to the four ends of the earth we started after them and it was ten o'clock before we found all of them some of them was ten miles off taking the back track every camp that we saw had lost cattel it commenced raining again at noon and rained till night to of dorseys men came to our camp hunting oxen they had lost 13 head our hunter came in this morning braute no game they stayed last night at a camp five miles below us

May 31

Went 17 miles roads better than i expected to find them this has been an exciteing day in the first place a man ahead shouted buffolo all of the men run for thear guns and started in pursuit they had not got far when a fine noble elk came rushing up to the road as if he was going to break through the train he turned before he got within gun shot and passed ahead but knapp shot at him but missed him we had not gon far before we heard a great shouting firing and presently a great thundering big buffolo came tearing up the valley about twenty men on horse back wear close on after him as soon as he saw us he turned up towards the bluffs but we cut him off he was now a getting tughtered out and begun to show fight one of our men run up and fired a pistol at him befor he could turn his horse the old fellow was into him he pitched the horse and rider heels over head luckily he did not hurt them much over twenty shots wear fired at him At last Capt Bowers brout him down there was great rejoicing when the old fellow tumbled we all had a fine feast at night off of the old bulls meat and promised ourselves many a one to come the storm last tuesday night has done great damage to the emigrants hardly a train that we can hear from but has lost more or less of thear stock they have got out amonst the bluffs and it is a chance wether they ever get them all again

June 1

The excitement of yesterday has not worn of yet buffolo in quanties have been seen at a distance but when we would come up with them they would turn out to be rocks or something else we see lots of men out a hunting cattel one train ahead of ous lost two hundred head, what they will do if they cannot find them is more than i can tell they are to be

pityed we passed the forks of the river to day and camped at the crossing place after fording a small slue distance 20 miles road good weather pleasant.

They had now come to the famous crossing of the South Platte, where the river was "a mile wide and a foot deep" as the saying of the trail had it. The ford was a few miles above the place where the two forks of the river met, and around the bustling activity of the crossing a small settlement was beginning to grow, a settlement later to become the town of North Platte, extending across the neck of land from one river to the other. The emigrant trail crossed this neck of land to the northern fork of the river. There were roads at this time on both sides of the North Platte and the Jerseyville Company chose the route which was later abandoned on the south bank. Although the road was new, the grades were easy and life fell into a steady uneventful routine that left the emigrants free to enjoy the trail.

A few days after the train turned up the river-bank, they found themselves in a new world. It was no gradual transformation, but a sudden waking one morning to the realization that the East they knew was left behind them, and a West, unknown and exciting, was on every hand. The strange shallow river meandering among its islets between treeless banks, the clear, thin air, the queer ungainly jackrabbits with their long black-tipped ears, starting up from the sandy hollows to lope away at astounding speed, the lizards sunning themselves on the rocks, and here and there a cactus plant, all spoke of new conditions and hinted of the desert ahead. Against this unfamiliar background, such men or traces of men as they encountered outside their own organization, took on added significance. The traders and their yarns, strays from other camps with the news they brought, the graves by the road side, even the Mormons whom they formerly hated and feared, were objects of interest.

This strange sect had been started in the year 1830 in Western New York by Joseph Smith who professed to have been guided by

an angel to the hiding place of an additional Bible, "The Book of Mormon," written in strange characters on plates of gold. He organized a church and a community of believers which emigrated first to Ohio and later to Missouri near Independence. From there they were driven out on the accusation of being abolitionists, and took up land on the Mississippi in Illinois where they built the city of Nauvoo. But their discipline roused the suspicion of their frontier neighbors, as their material success due to that very organization gave rise to some envy. Strange social customs led to charges of immorality, and feeling against them grew so high and so bitter that the military had to be called in. To prevent a civil war, Joseph Smith surrendered and then was killed by a mob from whom his captors could not protect him. His people, practically driven out by the soldiers, abandoned their city in 1845 and set out to found a state of their own beyond the boundaries of the United States. At a spot north of Kane's Landing in Iowa near the Council Bluffs, a site now covered by the shifting river's channel, they established a camp for their women and children and the weaker members of the party, while a selected group of men pushed on across the plains and beyond the first range of the mountains to the basin of the Great Salt Lake. Here they were, at that time, outside the jurisdiction of the American Government, and could set up their own state of Deseret. In 1847, the main body of citizens were brought over the trail from the settlement near the Council Bluffs, and only enough were left behind to manage the smithies and wagon shops for converts who might take the trail, and the forwarding warehouses and depots for the regular post and express services maintained for the desert city.

The Mormon community at Salt Lake was then scarcely two years old when the emigration of 1849 began, and was still in need of many things. As Paxton says in his History of the American Frontier: "The Mormons on Great Salt Lake received the forty-niners as a direct interposition of Providence for their benefit. . . . When they brought in the early crops of 1849, they knew that the procession of gold seekers would want supplies and that they could pro-

vide them. Many a Mormon farmer did a profitable business in live stock, picking up emaciated animals of emigrants for a song, fattening them for a few months, and selling them again at a fancy price. Few of the forty-niners had much money, but they had goods—furniture, tools, farm implements that they could not carry further with their animals dropping exhausted, but which the Mormons needed. The exchange was unavoidable for the miners and profitable for the Mormons who, by the end of 1849, were well organized, well fed, and well supplied." And while the Mormons must have been surprised that their former enemies could thus be of use to them it must have been no less astonishing to the men from Illinois to find the post and express riders and the freighters from Salt Lake City neighborly fellows ready to share their knowledge of the trail, to carry letters and to give what information they could. Even the Mormons took on a different aspect in this new land.

Language and content both become more picturesque as Hackney proceeds:

[June] 2

Went 21 miles to day we crossed the south fork of the platt this morning it was about half a mile acrost and from 2 to 3 feet deep we all had to wade it had no trouble getting over after we left the river we saw three buffolo the boys took after them and after a long chase killed one of them some men below killed the other two as they weare crossing the river buffalo appear to be more plenty on this side of the river we saw a large drove weare we stoped at noon we crossed over to the north fork of the platt and followed up the valley theare is not a stick of wood to be seen we will have to make out with chips they will do well enough when dry Greaser and Jim Jerome each killed an antelope to day

1849

June 3

Made 15 miles the road has been very sandy part of the way it is a new trail that has not been traveled before this year we saw a large

drove of buffolo this morning before we left camp this morning they came within three hundred yards of our camp we chased them to the river a company on the opposite side killed two of them as they crossed over greaser killed another antelope today burton also killed one we layed in a stock of wood on the road to day as we intend to lay by to morrow and are not sure of finding weare we camp this has been the warmes day that we have had on the road

[June] 4

lay by this day we have been very busy all day cooking and overhauling our load part of our flour got wet the other night and we had to take it out and sun it had everything fixed up before sundown the wind has blew very strong all day we have fine grass and tolerable good water the teams have been rolling by all day i should think at least two hundred have passed us since daylight old Boyde from monticello passed us to day

[June] 5

Traveled 15 miles the road has been very sandy one of our oxen was lame this morning and we had to turn him out we followed up the valley till 2, o'clock when the road left the river and went over the bluffs had a steep hill to asend we kept along on the bluffs till we struck ash hollow hear the road from the upper crossing came in it had been very warm the first part of the day when we struck ash hollow the wind had raised and blewe very strong the sand blew in every direction And almost blinded us thear is a camp of some Indians at the mouth of the hollow they wear all drunk when we passed them they offered Jarbo a fine pony for three gallons of whiskey we passed several springs to day water brackish camp one mile from ash hollow grass poor plenty of dry cedars on the bluff for fuel Theare is a very dark cloude a raising in the west the lighting is a flashing insessently and has every appearance of a tremendous storm our oxen are all picketed so let it come

[June] 6

Drove 17 miles road sandy the country around looks desolate no timbe to be seen and scarcely any grass the road crosses a number of revines sand from 8 to 10 inches deep and very hard pulling for the

oxen we passed castel bluffs this forenoon they raise to the hight of three hundred feet from the surface of the plains they are covered withed small stunted cedars we have had several showers of rain during the day it rained all last night but had no wind with it which is something remarkable camp half a mile from the river water & grass good

[June] 7

Made 18 miles the weather is very faverable neather two hot nor to cold the country has a more cheerful aspect then wear we passed yester day theas heavy sandy roads have made some of the heavy loaded teams lighting up we passed a camp to day weare thear had been over a hundred dollars worth of provision thrown away you can find all kind of tools provision and lots of other things scattered around every camping ground passed another grave to day it was a man from michigan a man passed us this morning A going back that said our wagon made four hundred & eighty four wagons that he had passed since day light i counted one hundred & fifty ahead of us in one string camped by some small ponds water muddy no wood grass good
1849

[June] 8

Went 20 miles road excelent with the exception of some sandy places passed the court house rock at a distance it bears some resembelanc to a court house it is two hundred feet high and stands out by itself on the open plain on the top is a mass of rock simelar to the dome of a court house a train of wagons from the mormon settelment at salt lake passed us to day they told us that gold in incestraustable quanties had been found on both sides of the california mountains they also report the grass from hear to salt lake to be better than it ever was nown to be before the met the first wagons beyond fort larime one hundred miles the weather still continues plesant camp by a pond of bad water grass fine theare is no wood for a long distance we have hauled wood in our wagon for the last hundred miles game is scarce we have not seen an antelope or buffolo for two or three days our camp is in sight of chimney rock distant 12 miles chapman stay behind with one of his oxen that was taken he has not got up yet

[June] 9

Started early this morning and went 18 miles we passed chimney rock at ten o'clock this is the most remarkable object that i ever saw and if situated in the states would be visited by pearsons from all parts of the world it raises from the plain in the form of a large mound to the hight of 200 feet on the very peak of the mound the chimney stands it is one hundred and fifty feet high above the top of the mound wich with the mound makes 350 feet it can be seen for twenty miles befor you get to it, it is sixty feet in diameter at its base and the same at the top altogether it is a wonderful structure the roads are still good, it looked a good deal like rain this morning when w left camp but cleared off after misting a while and continued plesant all day after we left chimney rock we struck the river and followed it up till 5' o clock when we camped we had hardly got supper when a storm came up which for two hours raged with a fury unpareled the rain fell in sheets and soon got everything afloat the thunder roared in one continual volley and the lighting flashed insessently Jim Bowman was out in the whole storme guarding the cattel

[June] 10

Made 15 miles road good in a sandy soil like this a rain like last night runs the sand together and makes better wheeling a yoke of oxen weare killed by the lighting at a camp just below us the same flash kocked two men senseles we passed scots bluffs to day they are named after an old Indian trader he was desending the river with a load of furs in company with other traders when he was taken sick his comrads put him ashore and left him the next spring a trapper found a skeleton on the bluffs which he recognized to be scoots by his blanket and papers that he found by it from this bluff you can see the peaks of the rocky mountains on a clear day we left the river again soon after leaving camp this morning and struck for the bluffs theare is two ranges of bluff hear and the road runs between them we followed up till within two miles of weare the road crosses the ridge when we camped grass is not very good wood plenty mostly pitch pine the first we have seen the water is first rate being spring water and as cold as ice it was quite a treat after being confined to the muddy water of the platt for two

weeks theare is a trading post hear a man keeps it who has lived heare for 15 years he has an Indian wife and three children he has a blacksmith shop and tin shop he told us that up till this morning one thousand and ninty wagons had passed his place thear is nigh three hundred wagons camped within 2 miles of us this evening thear has been no water on the road for the last 15 miles and they have been all a pushing to reach this place we have been bothered nearly to death for the last few days by the mosquites you cannot go twenty yards from the road but that you are covered with them along the road thear is none chapman came up with his ox at noon

[June] 11

Drove 22 miles the road for twelve miles was fine slightly desending we crossed the ridge and came down on the valley thear was no water on the road till we came to horse creek our oxen have had scarsely any water since yesterday morning we nooned on the creek after leaving the creek we crossed a number of sand hills it was very heavy hauling over them got into camp late water & grass good from this camp a fine view of larime peak can be seen it is said to be one hundred and fifty miles distant Rockwell stoped at the blacksmith shop this morning to get his wagon tire set he got into camp about 9 o'clock they charged him seven dollars for setting the two hind tire and Jo borem done most of the work

JOURNAL

[June] 12

went 15 miles roads sandy we had a heavy shower of rain and hail just as we stoped for noon we left the river at 3 o clock and went 2 miles and camped grass tolerable good no wood nor water brout both with us

[June] 13

went 4 miles to larime river we had to raise our wagon beds up and put blocks under them to raise them up above the water the river run very swift and made difficult crossing crabb and arnspekers teams got into deep water and wet all of their load fort larime is one mile from the river it is built after the fashion of the mexicans ranch thiere is no troops hear yet but they expect them in a few days crabb stoped here to

unload and dry his provision we went on three miles and camp had a long crooked hill to decend their had been several wagons upset coming down we all came down safe.

Here Hackney interrupted his journal to give the space of two pages to the mileage tally from St. Joseph to the coast. Each day he entered the length of the drive. He set the figures down in columns and drew across as each of the principal landmarks was passed. The totals for these divisions of the trail were added separately:

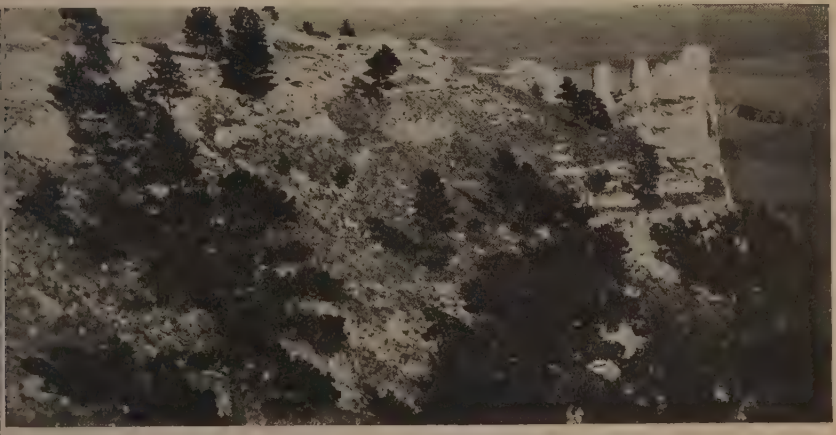
	106	
	170	
To Fort Kerney	276	
F. Larime	302	
S. P.	274	
F. H.	273	
	212	Head Humbot
	349	Truckey
	161	

He used the initials S. P. for South Pass and F. H. for Fort Hall. According to his reckoning, the road from St. Joseph to the mines was 1834 miles long, and at Laramie the Jerseyville boys were about one third of the way across. The level plains were already behind them, for the prairie had begun to lift and roll, gathering itself into the first folds of the Continental Divide. The country had a wild fantastic beauty that Henry Page could not resist.

Knowing that he would have a great deal to say he started at the very top of his sheet in a fine copper plate hand, and luckily this letter was rescued from the burning that had scorched its edges, before the holes caused by the blackened corners became too large for the consequent gaps to be easily filled.*

* Words or letters enclosed in square brackets have been supplied.

COVERED WITH SMALL STUNTED CEDARS



MAJESTIC BLUFFS . . . PEARLY PERPENDICULAR

STILL KEEP UP THE PLATTE RIVER

WE CROSSED OVER TO THE NORTH FORK OF THE PLATTE

FORT LARAMIE 13 JUNE 1849—

DEAR MARY

We find that, by paying high postage to the states, we can send in letters—And I am glad to have an opportunity to tell my dear wife of my whereabouts and welfare—We camped this noon five miles west of this trading post (Laramie) and will not leave till tomorrow morning—I wrote you from the Nemahah River dated 13 May, but did not send it back till 22nd—also I wrote from Fort Karney dated 24th May—both [of] which I trust you have rec^{d}—We consider it so doubtful about this reaching you, that we thoug[ht] we would economise & send all out letters in one—Since I last wrote from Fort Kearney, we have b[een] travelling up the Platte River—Since that date, we have made 300 miles on our journey, and I [am g]lad to be able to say that, we haveall enjoyed good health and that our cattle are doing very w[ell but they] begin to show, that their way has been long—They have not fallen off but little, and exc[ept for one of th]e Davis oxen, are not footsore—That one is not much lame and is gaining—we have worked [them a]ll the time—In the last seven days we have made 148 miles—We are now 600 miles fro[m S^{t} Jo]—and 530 miles from Fort Hall, where the road leaves the Oregon trail—A few days since [we m]et three mormon wagons from Salt Lake, going into the States but as we had no letters pre[pare]d, were not able to send—They said that this had been a very unusual season—more favo[ra]ble for grass than ever known—The feed has been thus far first rate and for the last week [w]e have had heavy showers every 24 hours—We are truly in the region of thunder showers, a[n]d the thunder rolls from bluff to bluff, with all the grandeur of the loudest bolts of heavens artillery [—]We are & have been for the past week, amid the most grand & sublime scenery my eyes have ever beheld —At one time we are moving over a fine bottom land, spread out as far as the eye can reach, like an ocean of grass—At another time we are rolling over the high lands of this region, being compelled to leave the river, and make a large circuit, where the bluffs approach the river & forbid a passage—perchance leaving the bottom lands up a long and beautiful swell & finding our way back again, through a narrow defile, down the bed (now dry) of a stream, with the bluffs on each side, frowning down upon us, from the height of 200 or 300 feet—At another

time we are winding our way along the border of the river, with a perpendicular bluff of the same height, almost within reach of our whips —At another time we left the river at what is called Scotts Bluffs and went up a beautiful valley for fifteen miles—The width where we entered was some six or eight miles, gradually narrowing to [o]nly half a mile— From the road which ran near the centre, the ground rose gradu[all]y on each side, like a beautiful lawn, and then arose majestic bluffs on each hand, from 200 to 400 feet—Just think of all these bluffs as nearly perpendicular, formed of a whi[te] marl or fine soft sand-stone, all crowned along the edge with cedar & pine & eve[ry] jog or nook that would support the roots, alike clothed with these evergreens and you [ha]ve a faint picture of our route—In some places the bluffs are lower and rolling [—c]lothed with grass to the summit,—in some they are bare sand hills, filling the [air] for miles with a cloud of fine sand, as the winds sweep over their surface—in some t[hey] are perpendicular, with a chalk like wall of miles in extent—dotted here & ther[e] with a cedar or pine tree—about 65 miles back of this we passed a peculiar bluff, stan[din]g alone in the prarie called the Court House—The road passed within about four mile[s a]nd it had the appearance of court house or more properly, like the pictures we have seen of the capitol at Washington—of the same marl formation, and about three fourths of mile in circumfer[en]ce and about 500 ft high—The sides were washed & worn by the rains till they had the appearance of columns—Near the top there was a second story smaller than the lower part and on top of that arose a vast dome—This is the view we had at the distance of four miles—like a grand old castle all in ruins—those of our train who visited & climbed to its summit, can tell a grander tale about it, than I can—At the same time directly ahead of us, we had in view, at the distance of fifteen miles another remarkable object called Chimney Rock—The next day by noon I was on top of the accessible part of the said Rock—This also stands apart from the other bluffs and is about 400 feet high— For eight miles I was trudging along ahead of the train, expecting every mile to be at its base—At last, I stood trembling with fatigue and excitement at the foot of this grand column—After a few moments of wonder & rest I began to wind my way up its steep sides till I came to where further progress was impossible—I cast my eyes down & the horses &

men at the foot looked, like pigmies—I turned my eyes aloft and viewed the upright shaft above me, till I was gla[d] to take my way back to the level land below me—There I sat me down and looke[d] with wonder upon this work of nature—and from natures work up to that God who [for]med all these vast superstructures, I raised my thoughts—This Chimney Rock is a full [mile] from the range of bluffs, standing on, comparatively, a level place—It is of a conica[l shape al]most round and for about 300 feet (the height to which I climbed) receeds gradually in s[ize—an]d is then surmounted with an upright column of about 50 ft in diameter, and of a[bou]t 100 feet in height—This shaft has given it the name of "Chimney" rock, from its resemblanc[e a]t a great distance, to a high chimney or shot tower———I have endeavoured dear wi[fe]y to give an outline, of the grand scenery of this region—though faint, it may enable you to have some idea of this vast region of country —This region is of a sandy, ster[i]le nature subject to extreme drought —or wet—We have had so much rain of late that t[he] rivers are high, for this time of the year & the roads have much benefited thereby—As yet we have had cold nights—needing as much cover in the night as when we left S^{t} Jo—and the first hot day is yet to shine upon us—This day is very pleasant & cool like a September day in Ill^{a}———We are now at the foot of the Black hills & will still keep up the Platte (the north fork) some 100 miles & then cross the Black hills and then on the Sweet water River, which we follow up to the "south pass" some 275 miles ahead—This South Pass is a valley of the avarage width of 25 miles & well watered, and we shall find no trouble in going through the same, for feed is not scarce, so the mormon's said, whom we met—— There is probably some 1200 teams ahead of us—How many behind us, you in the States only know, for we have no way of finding out their numbers—The Alton C^{o} is only three days ahead of us—The reason we have travelled so fast & so successfully is, that w[e] have rarely tied our cattle at night, but have guarded them, as they were eating or layi[ng] down—Thus they had all the grass & rest the wished & were ready for an early start—[We] take an hour & a half or two hours noon halt & stop at night by 5 or 6—Start in the morn before six—generally travel 10 or 11 hours each day—Judge & myself drive each half of the day—Hank & Tom do the cooking & wash the dishes—We all stand

guard our turn—about once in four d[ays]—two hours on guard & four hours off guard for the 24 hours—We generally go to bed between nin[e &] ten & up by four in the morn—Not an hour for leisure, but either trudge, trudge along the (road) or jumping around camp—Sleep like logs till the guard arouse us in the morning & the[n u]p & at our daily round—One day that we lay by, I was washing while Hank & Tom cut off ou[r w]agon bed some 15 inches and coupleed up our wagon some twenty inches—We have the greatest a[ppe]tites that I ever saw—We have eat up 150 lbs flour 50 lbs meal—over 160 lbs meat—crac[ke]rs by the half bushel &c &c—We have great times, eating our ham, or pork, & buiscuit, doug[h]nuts, applesauce &c &c—The preserves still are good, we have eat only once of them, & then home, sweet home was our only theme—I think much of you & children & not only long to see [y]ou, but also begin to count the time when I shall hear from you—dont fail to write, as I mentioned in my last—We are now one third of the way to California, & have been five weeks on the road—Though two long months & two days have passed away since I left you, still I feel for & love that dear wife of mine, who had the courage to say good bye to her dear Henry—And how are the darling children? O how I wish I could clasp you all within my arms—Well Mary I must again say, good bye—If I can send in, I will write as often as I can—but you must not be disappointed if you do not receive another till dated from California—Dont fear for my health, & we have seen no Indians since we left the neighbourhood of S^{t} Jo—

Your husband

HENRY PAGE—

no address

CHAPTER VII

The Second Mile-Post

FORT LARAMIE had been built by the American Fur Company, and was under the control of their manager Bordeaux when Francis Parkman visited it in '43 and when the Donners went through three years later. He may still have been in command, although looking for the coming of the troops to take it over any day. It was an ambitious structure for a frontier fort, standing on the bank of Laramie Creek about a mile from where it emptied into the river, built with substantial walls of adobe, large bastions at the angles, and a square blockhouse at one side of the forward enclosure. A big corral for animals adjoined at the back and the whole was kept carefully white-washed. The massive walls loomed a welcome sight to the emigrant who counted it the first great landmark of the trail. The range behind it now known as the Laramie Mountains were then thought to be part of the Black Hills which actually lie many miles further north and east. But, by whatever name they might be called, they presented a real difficulty to the wagon trains with their steep rises and rocky precipitous descents. Here the Jerseyville boys learned new tricks such as locking their wagons on the bad down grades by lashing the wheels securely together and how to cross a deep river where the one ferry was too intolerably crowded.

Hackney indicates that mishaps had begun to take serious toll of the parties ahead:

[June] 14

lay by this day and done our washing and fix up for a nother start we have good grass and plenty of wood

[June] 15

traveled 20 miles roads hard and rolled but later tolerable hilly we pass the warm spring in the forenoon and then asended a long rocky hill we camped for the night on the bitter water grass very poor water good wood plenty

[June] 16

made twenty miles we followed up the bitter water crossing it three times we then left it and took up a dry sandy hollow after following the hollow a long ways we asended a steep hill and stoped for noon one of our men broute in a antelope while we stoped here after desending a steep rocky hill we came to horse creek and camped we passed a wagon at the foot of the last hill we came down that had broke a axletree we have passed over twenty wagons this side of fort larime that have been left behind we have plenty of wood water and tolerable good grass

JOURNAL

[June] 17

Went 23 miles over the roughest hillyest road i ever saw we had to lock our wagon at least one hundred times a going 17 miles we begin to see buffolo again the boys shot one to day he was the fattest one i have seen they got over fifty pounds of tallow out of him we came to the south fork of the la bonte and crossed over and kept on over to the north fork we had some very bad roads between the forks the dust was almost insupportable camped on the north fork of the la monte water good grass tolerable

[June] 18

went 14 miles and camped on the la preel river roads still rough have a very pretty camping ground thiere is a spot just large enough to camp the train and it is surrounded by trees and brush the river runs with in twenty yards of the camp thiere is an old indian camp ground right acrost the stream from us

[June] 19

went 17 miles Just after we had left camp this morning we saw two buffoloes we started after them and after runing them about five miles

made out to kill one we crossed several streams and at noon struck the platt river it is deeper here than were we crossed it below fort larime and not so muddy we had an election for officers at noon our same ones were releected without oppossition we came on and crossed deer creek and camped on the bank of the river this is the place wear we are to cross at we are a going to make canoes to take our wagons over with out unloading they are a crossing here now on rafts takeing thiere wagons to peaces and make two trips for one wagon and load we havy plenty of wood but poor grass

[June] 20

this has been a busy day we went to work in the morning and by three oclock in the afternoon had made three large canoes twentyfour feet long and two feet over we put them in the river and floated them down to camp we then lashed them all togeather the two outsied ones just far enough apart to let the wheels in we then took thirty men abourd and took a trip acrost the river she went first rate it was two late to commence crossing to day so we tied up for the night we found good grass three miles from her and drove the cattel to it thiere was five men drownded here to day four of them were drown by a raft upseting the other one was trying to swim a mule over the river

[June] 21

crossed our wagons all over safe had a hard days work was in the water all day long after we crossed over we sold our boat for twenty dollars a man was killed here to day by the accidental discharge of a gun he was traveling along the road when a fellow was takeing off his wagon cover and had a loaded gun in his wagon the cover cought the cock of the gun and went off the man fell dead with out a grone our cattel were drove up and swam over before night had some trouble geting them started over

[June] 22

got started again this morning some of our cattel was missing this morning and have not been found yet left men behind to find them the road has been very sandy and has been hard pulling for the oxen we traveled 15 miles Jo Borems team run under a tree and broke all the

wagon bows camped for the night on the river grass first rate plenty of wood

[June] 23

made 17 miles roads still sandy thiere was an ox died last night he was well when he was turned out last night and was found dead this morning we left the river in the afternoon and went 2 miles and camped by a small pond the water was not fit for use drove our oxen down on the river for grass

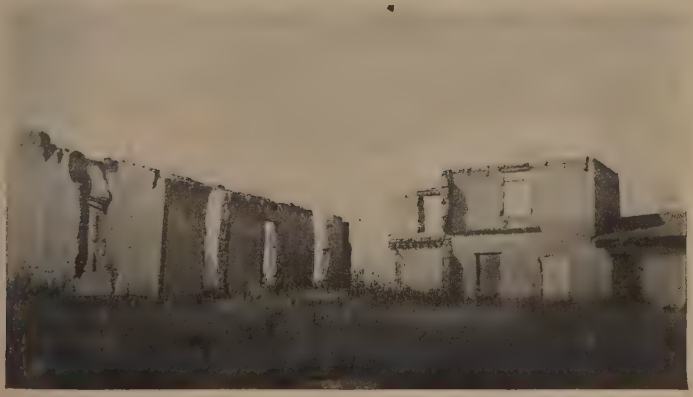
[June] 24

drove 23 miles over a barren country we passed a mineral spring water tolerable good thier was no water for the next 14 miles excepting a spring of alkali water it was very hot and we all got very thirsty before we got to good water i saw several dead oxen along the road today we supposed that this alkali water had killed them camped at the willow springs water fine and cool grass not very good

[June] 25

traveled 20 miles roads very good for the first ten miles after that it was very sandy seen a great curorisity to day the ground was covered to the depth of two inch[es] with saleratus as white and fine as i ever saw half a mile of it looked like a lake of clear water we struck the sweet water a few miles below Independanc rock it is a fine stream grass good no wood but the wild sage

The Independence Rock which they were approaching was a strange out-cropping rounded butte in the midst of the valley floor. It had long been a famous camping-place where the trains planned to spend the Fourth of July; hence its name. Who began the custom of carving the names of passing parties on the faces of the cliff is not known, but from early days this had been done until even in Henry's time the Rock was a gigantic register of the trail. To-day all available smooth space, some that seems amazingly inaccessible, is covered with inscriptions large and small. That the Jerseyville boys should have reached it by June 26 shows that the rush of '49



FORT LARAMIE'S MASSIVE RUINS

FORT LARAMIE, ON THE PLATTE RIVER, NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE LARAMIE

(*From an old print*)

had gained over a week on the time of the usual overland wagon train:

[June] 26

went 15 miles it was a dead drag all day through the sand we passed Independanc rock in the forenoon the whole rock next to the road is covered with the names of the passers by we crossed sweet water one mile from the rock 4 miles from the ford we came to devils gate hear the river runs through a chasam appears to have forced its way through a mountain the sides of the chasm are 400 feet high perpendicular you can see the country for ten miles beyond the mountain through the gap we had a fine shower of rain just as we stoped for night another ox died this morning

[June] 27

made 16 miles we crossed several small stream on our route to day i saw more than twenty dead oxen laying along the road we supposed that they had been poisoned the water along here is all more or less inpregnated with alkili and is killing oxen every day camped on the river grass good we have been a lighting up our loads we have throwed away everything but provision enough to take us through and our clothing and tools we allow that we have reduced our load to twelve hundred one of Perrine oxen died last night

[June] 28

went 15 miles the road followed the river for 6 miles after that we left it for 8 miles we camped whear the road struck the river roads very sandy for the last 8 miles came in sight of mountains covered with snow one of the boys killed an antelope

[June] 29

traveled 17 miles roads tolerable good we left the river again for 16 mile 5 mile from the river we came to the ice springs it is a long swamp pease of ground by digging down six inches or a foot you come to a layer of pure ice about 4 inches thick how it ever come thier is a mystery to me we crossed the river and camped went out a hunting in the afternoon had three shots at antelope my gun missed fire every time old greaser brought in two antelopes and a fine large goose king also killed two geese

June 30

made 18 miles roads good for 10 miles we then left the river and began to asend the mountains we had a long winding hill to go up and very steep in places for three miles it was very rocky and dangerous for wagons from thier to camp it was slightly desending and very fine we passed another ice spring this afternoon the ice tasted salty we also saw snow it was in a small hollow it was about a foot deep but the most singular thing about it was to see green grass growing within a foot of the snow saw goose berrys and currents growing whear we stoped for noon camped for the night on strawberry creek water good grass tolerable willows for fuel

July 1.

made 10 miles roads fine we crossed two creeks on the road we find snow in every sheltered spot camped on sweet water grass good found a company of traders hear done some trading with them one of them told me he had not been in the states for eighteen years they all had indiane wives with them

[July] 2

traveled 14 miles it was 10 miles from our camp this morning to the summet of the pass the ascent was so gradual that we could not tell when we wear at the top to look from the pass one would not think that he was on the top of a mountain three miles from the pass brout us to the pacific springs the first water that we saw that flows towards the pacific camped by the springs the traders passed us hear on their way to fort bridger

It had been a matter of note among the old timers that the Indians were not in evidence along this section of the trail that summer of 1849, and the fur traders from Fort Bridger had given an explanation of that disappearance which, whether true or not, was nevertheless interesting. They had recalled, so they said, to the faithful memories of their red friends certain happenings of twelve years before when the traders pushing up the rivers had been stricken with the small-pox. Runners had been sent out warning the Indians

to keep away, but the Pawnees had disobeyed the warning and had visited the white man's camps. Official government records showed that within a few weeks one half of the tribe died of the disease. The horror of this visitation had spread far out on the prairie, and small-pox was a word to conjure with even on the shoulders of the Rockies. Fear of disease may not have been the whole reason why the prairie-tribes gave the trail a wide berth during the first summer of the gold rush, but it undoubtedly played a weighty part.

The Jerseyville train was now on the summit of the Continental Divide, and the half day's rest gave Henry the chance to write his letter. Knowing that it might be long before he could mail, he devised a scheme by which he could literally cover his sheet. He wrote as usual until a page was filled and then, turning it about, he wrote between the lines. The thin spidery letters met and crossed at an angle like the pattern of a "herring-bone" weave. Not a particle of space was left empty. And again his silences were revealing. No mention was made of the men killed at the Platte crossing or that other, the victim of a gun's accidental discharge. These things might trouble Mary, and there was so much else to tell her:

(Read this page down, then turn bottom side up & so with all the other pages.)

SOUTH PASS 2 JULY 1849

DEAR MARY

We arrived to day at noon, at our camp, four miles west of the summit of the South Pass, and remain here, for the remainder of the day—We are on the waters that flow to the Pacific Ocean, and on a small stream & springs called the Pacific Springs, a branch of the Colorado River, emptying into the Gulf of California—I will begin my letter by saying that Hank, Tom, Judge & myself are very well & that our health has been excellent all the trip—I wrote you last from Fort Laramie, dated the about the 13th June—since then we have travelled westward 275 miles —We came on fromt that point (Ft. L) over the far famed Black Hills, without any trouble & up the Platte to the place of crossing to the North Side without any hinderance—We have great numbers (some hundreds

of trains) encamped either waiting their turn at the Mormon Ferry, or putting themselves across in various ways—some on rafts—some in canoes—& some in their wagon beds, made tight by corking—We camped 25 miles east of the Ferry & found out that we could have time & expense & at the same time have good feed for our cattle, by making boats & ferrying ourselves across—Our company numbers 52 men with 15 wagons & by the next night we had made & securly lashed together, rigged with oars, three large canoes—each 25 feet long & made of large trees—In the morning we made an experiment & found out that 30 men would not sink it very deep in the water—We then loaded the boats with all the chains & yokes of the company & made our first trip across this swift & deep river. The next trip we rolled a wagon, all loaded, on board & made a successful trip & in like manner till all were over—We finished about 4 oclock of this same day (the 22") and then swam our cattle & horses over—I was in the water all day, up to my thighs, towing up the boat so that we could make the landing at the right place—On one side of the river (where I was stationed viz the north side) we towed up, wading on a bar, on the south side they towed up, on the bank—The men were about equally divided on each side of the river, & all hands worked like good fellows—in towing the boat, and rolling on & off the wagons by hand—After a good nights rest, when we were making ready to start we found four oxen belonging to the train missing, one from our team —I, imediately with Tom & Hank & about ten others started in hunt —They were not to be found on the north side of the River and we concluded the had swam back to the south side—I took the horse & rode till noon all over the hills without success, then I returned to the river, jumped on a boat & towed my horse across & searched, but could not find the stray's & just at sundown, crossed the river to the north side —got my supper & turned my horse lose to eat, & took a tramp on foot, & after walking about three miles, found out the Jersey C° boys, had about ten oclock that morning found the oxen—The oxen, horses & men were so well described together with the name of the Company, that I was satisfied they had been found—With quickened steps I walked back to my horse & with the new moon for my light, I started in pursuit of the train which had left that morning, on its westward march—I rode till the moon went down, about nine oclock & finding the horse & myself so tired

I stoped at a Missouri train, and asked to sleep under a tent, wrapped in my saddle blanket, but was refused permission—Probably this is the only instance of the kind that has happened to any one, on the trip—I bade them good night, & told them, I would take my chance, with the wolves—Till ten oclock, I walked on, leading my horse till I should find good grass, or another camp—I saw at about ¼ mile from the road a light & mounting my horse, rode up & found three wagons & all abed except the guard (one man) here I was welcomed & furnished with a good blanket & room was made for me in the tent—This is, the way dear wife I spent my birthday, and while looking through the thousands of cattle, my thoughts were more centered on you & the children, than on all other things—I knew you would be thinking more than usual of your dear husband on that day, and with fondness did I let my thoughts dwell on the dear wife, longing for the return of her absent mate—I set many a kiss, floating on the breeze to you that day, and with unusual feelings, I put my hand into my pocket, for my memerandum book & lo! it was lost—In it, was your two letters, & the scribblings I had hoped would interest you, but they were gone & it was in vain to think of retracing my steps, thus putting myself far in rear of our train & with but poor hope of success—With a long sigh I bade adieu to the same, and till, this day have not put pen or pencil to paper—From time to time as opportunity offers, I have concluded to write in this form, & thus always have a letter ready to send in whenever I meet a chance—We expect to meet a mail carrier from the Mormen City, soon and I shall send this, even if the sheet is not half filled—And I may have time only to seal the same, without saying good by—if so—take it for granted that all is well & going on well, for I will not send it, without saying a word, if such should be the case——— The next day (24 June) about noon I caught up with the train, & found that all the boys & lost oxen were in, before me——— The general charactar of the streams on this eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, is very different from what I thought any streams could be in this section—Where we ferried the North Fork of the Platte, we found a deep a rapid river—some ¼ mile wide—, at Fort Laramie on the same River, it was much wider but not so deep, & below the junction of the two Forks, say at Fort Kearny, the river was 1½ or two miles wide & could be waded by man, and beast—The water evaporates rapidly and many an hundred

miles received no addition to its volume, by any considerable branches, & the bed of the river is filled up with the rolling sands brought down from the high lands & thus it spreads over a wide surface, and becomes less & less in volume, till it empties into some larger river—There is more running water where we crossed the North Platte than probably runs from the great Platte into Missouri River—We found that there was some 1400 teams ahead of us at the crossing of the Platte, which number has been reduced since that time—About 175 miles from Fort Laramie we left the Platte river to the south of us & struck onto one of its branches the Sweetwater which we have followed up to within five miles of our present camp—In stricking across the high lands, to avoid the *canons* near the mouth of the Sweetwater, we passed through the district of bad & poisoned water—We drove 24 miles in one day without water for our cattle, over a very dusty road, & with a hot sun upon us —We had poor quarters at night for our slves & cattle & early next morning started over another long stretch of 18 miles for the sweetwater River—which we reached safely—Three or four of the oxen, which were drove loose, on those days, have since died—None of the other cattle were affected with the water—Through this place, above mentioned, & for fifty or sixty miles up the Sweetwater the only water that was good was the River water—The cattle were strictly guarded & watered only in the River—The water is saturated with Alkali, and in these Alkali lakes, now partially dry, we could & did pick up Salaeratus, which covered the bottom of the lakes for ¾ or one inch—All the standing water & many of the springs were thus effected—These lakes look liked a bed of silver, and with a strong alkali stench arising therefrom, made all that barren region appear desolate—For the last forty miles the alkali has disappeared from the soil—The valley of the Sweetwater is beautiful & the feed good—The grass in all this valley is the buffalo grass—sweet—short & nutritious———For the last 50 miles we have been ascended this far famed South Pass and it was well for us that we had guide books to tell us when we entered on & arrived at the summit of the same—This east side of the Pass, is a gradual rise of the valley of the S. River some 20 or 25 miles wide, with the mountains on either side and hardly a tree in view—The whole surface of the country is covered with the Artemisia, (Wild Sage) which is excellent fuel—growing from

six inches to six feet in height—with a large body—not of solid wood, but more like compact layers of bark. It burns briskly, with a strong smell of turpentine & campor—Most of the plants of this district are aromatic—and this mountain air, is strongly impregnated with them——For the last 40 or 50 miles we have had in full view the snow capped summits of the rocky mountains—We have them now in view, north us, lifting their white tops towards the heavens—Yesterday & today the snow, has been in view in the ravines near the road—I have been on these banks of snow, almost as solid as ice—The air is cool & bracing & much like the last of the Indian summer which we have in the States —The nights are cool but still dry & healthy—Last night I was on guard & slept part of the night, rolled in a buffalo robe, without inconvenience. We have not seen an Indian, since we left the neighborhood of S^{t} Jo. excepting the wives of the traders—They (the traders) have told the Indians, that the whites had diseases among them worse, than their worst disease, the small pox—The traders say there is no Indians within 50 miles of the road—Our teams keep their flesh remarkably well, and our own team, looks better than they would, after spring plowing was done, if they had stayed on the Illinois praries—But just at present they are leg weary, and yesterday, today & tomorrow we drive only ten miles a day, & will lay by, for all the day on the 4th instant—when we will have a chunck of a celebration——We have not much fears, of being able to make the trip, with our teams, but I pity them who are a great distance behind us—We now take our cattle a mile from the road, & they find good grass—

The "chunk of a celebration" on the Fourth of July was a custom of the trail. The historian of the Donner Party says that they were wakened by a military salute from the guns of the party at sunrise. A platform of boxes was made in a nearby grove whither the emigrants repaired in procession from their camp. Patriotic songs were sung, the Declaration of Independence was read and the orator of the company gave an address. At the close of the banquet which followed the speech-making, the health and happiness of friends and kindred was drunk in silence, all standing with faces to the east.

Anything so elaborate as this was impossible for the hurrying gold

seekers, but they too could pause in the midst of discouragement to rejoice over an adventure of the nation's past, even though Hackney speaks of it somewhat patronizingly:

[July] 3

went 21 miles over a dry dusty road and a barren country dead oxen have been stre[wn] along the road very thick we crossed one small stream at noon no more water on this road Our cattel suffered a great deal the dust raised so that we could not see our team half the time we came to the forks of the road at four o clock one of them is the old road by fort bridger ane the other a cut off the cut off saves 80 or 111 miles and a good deal of rough road we have concluded to take the cut off camped on the Littel sandy have the poorest grass we have had on the road

[July] 4

lay by part of the day yeasterdays drive uese our cattel oup more than any days drive we has ever done we lost one of our old oxen last night and over a dozen are about to die the boys appear to be discourage we had a kind of a celebration to day blowed up a powder keg and fired four or five rounds with our rifles as we have no grass we yoked up and went 8 miles to the big sandy crossed over and camped on a high hill we found good grass hear our oxen layed hold of it as if they weare famished thear was only 8 wagons come on hear with us the rest stoped back to alter thier wagons and lighting up their load they will come on to morrow we lighted our wagon four hundred pounds threw out every thing by a enough to take us through we have to hear take a streach of 41 miles with out water some grass on the road

[July] 5 & 6

Lay by till 4 o clock the boys weare all hard to work a fixing thier wagons crabb came up just as we started we rolled out at 4 o clock and traveled on till nine o clock when we made a halt for one hour we then traveled on till sunrise we got breackfast and gave our cattel a gallon of water a piece and started again and traveled on till 6 o'clock in the after noon when we struck green river we found out when we got hear that instead of 40 miles we had traveled 52 it had been measuured the day

before by two road markers and both made it the same distance we have to ferry this river they charge from 4 to 8 dollars to cross a wagon our turn will not come on till sunday eavening or monday morning part of the alton company crossed to day they have splite up in three squads we had a very good road part of the way over the rest was hilly we came down some of the worst hills we have had since we left home the dust also rose in clouds the wind driveing it down the road so that thear was no way of avoaiding it

[July] 7

lay by this day nothing doing in camp this is the first day that we have layed by since we left st Jo that we could call a day of rest i for my part had my washing to do so that it was not much rest for me we have got our cattel on an island belowe us it is pretty good grass thiere is plenty of fish in the river but i have been to lazy to catch them will try them to morrow

[July] 8

greaser and me tried our luck fishing to day he cought 5 and myself two they wear about a foot long some of the boys called them salmon we commenced at noon crossing our wagons over we got ten over before night three of our wagons did not get to the ferry when we did and the ferryman would not register any wagons only what was on the ground so that we did not get the other three over till near midnight the other ten went out one mile and camped on a small stream grass very poor

[July] 9

travelled 17 miles the country very rough and broken crossed a large creek after follering it two or three miles after leaveing this stream we went 12 miles before we found good wa[ter] camped by a number of springh we begin to see snow on the hills again we have now to cross the dividing ridge between the rocky mountains and the great bason and must expect some rough roads the summit of the ridge is one thousand feet higher then the south pass our horsemen did not get into camp till twelve o'clock at night thear horses weare left on the island when the cattel weare drove off last night and they could not catch them for a long time they did not get them all till the middel of the afternoon

[July] 10

went 18 miles over a mountainous country the road was the roughest that we have ever traveled over water has been plenty every mile or so we found fine springs of cold water theare was plenty of good grass in all the valleys and on the sides of the hills we camped for the night on hams fork one of the tribuatarys of Greene river it is a large stream 50 yards wide and runs very swifte part of the alton company are camped hear they are all splite up not more than 8 or 10 wagons traveling togeather we have the best grass to night that we have ever had since we have been on the road

[July] 11

made 15 miles we crossed the fork this morning and then assend a long steep hill we wear detained 2 hours on the hill by a number of mule teams that got started before us this morning the teams belonged to the goverment and are a going to fort hall with a company of the rifle regement Jerome Taylor seen Jim Ware with them he is the orderly seargent of the company he told Jerome that one of thier men had deserted since they left the states after we got on the top of the hill we had a good road for ten miles we passed through a small grove of pine trees it seeamed natuarel to be in the woods again we hear began to clime another hill when we got on top we could see fore 50 miles at our feet lay the valley of bear river we now had to desend to the valley below we had got half down the first pitch when our wheel oxen came loose from the tongue and let the wagon down we fourtenly seen it in ti[me] and stoped it the road wound around the hill for two miles we had one wheel locked the wh[ole] way down and part of the way both we found a fine spring of water at the foot of the hill four miles from hear to bear river we watered our oxen and filled up our keg and then whent 2 miles to the top of another hill and camped we have passed the graves of three women to day two of them died in 48 and the other in 46 theare has been splendid grass all along our route to day everything looks green and cheerfull we got a fine Joke on our captains to day they started ahead to go to bear river to fish till we came up a party of the boys also went the captains was riding along by a patch of willows when they heard a rustling among them the willows was so thick

that they could not see 10 feet into them it moved so slow and careful that they weare sure that they had found a bear they had no guns and did not dare to go in at last they seen the rest of the boys a coming up they now wear sure of some bear meat for supper the boys scattered around the willows and a two of them whent in to starte him out they crept on till they got to the middel of the patch when they found an old give out ox they will hear of thear bear hunt for some time to come

July 12

We had a long steepe hill to desend this morning after coming down we followed the valley for two miles till we came to bear river valley we did not go to the river but down the valley till noon we hear crossed a stream called smiths fork it was too deep to ford at the old ford so we had to go higher up it hear had three forks two of them weare bad places to cross after we got over we had a half a mile of the worst road that we have yet seen the road run close to a high rocky bluff and the road itself was filled with large rocks towo or three feet above the surface camped at one o clock and lay by for the rest of the day distanc twelve miles

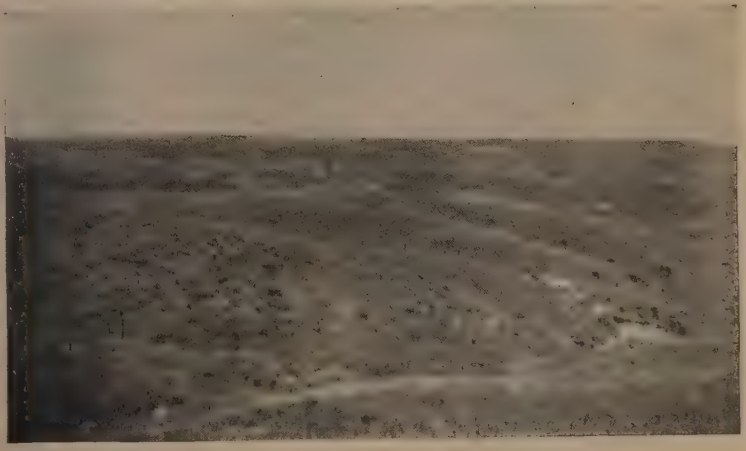
The road which Henry and his friends had been traveling since the Fourth of July was known as the Sublette Cut-Off, for it had been discovered and laid out by one of the four brothers of that name, all famous scouts and hunters renowned among the sharp-shooting "Rocky Mountain Men." Andrew was an adept in the method of capturing wild horses by "creasing," that is, shooting so as to graze the vertebræ and cause a temporary paralysis but no permanent injury. He came to a true hunter's end, being killed by a grizzly in California.

At the ferry the Woodburn boys had found their neighbors from Alton, Pettingal, Johnson, and the rest, but the spirit of disorganization had worked its will among them. They had broken up into discordant squads, and the continuation of Henry's letter vividly shows the advantages of discipline:

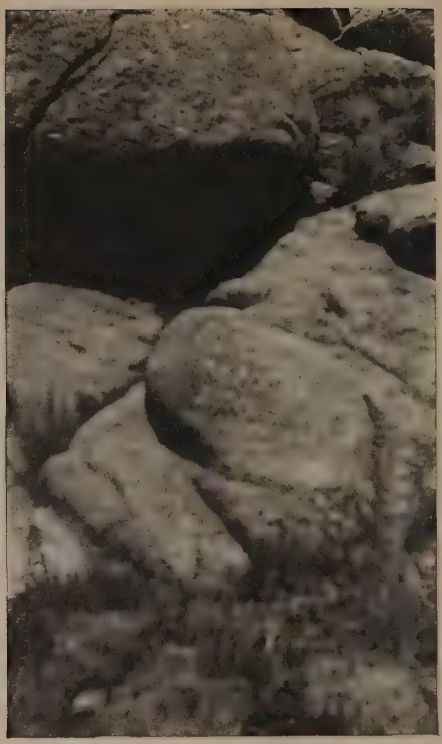
13 July—

Since writing the above we have travelled some 150 miles, and are now camped on Bear River, at the mouth of Thomas Fork—After we left the summit of the South Pass, our course was westward, down a valley similar to the one described on the eastern slope, only, of much shorter distance—The company decided to go through Sublette cut off, and thus keeping a westerly course, avoid the large bend to the south, of the usual emigrant trail—By taking this road we saved 80 miles, but had a more difficult road. We had 40 miles to travel without water, and since that stretch, our road has been over high & rugged mountains —All of this Cut off, is well watered excepting the stretch from Sandy to Green rivers (of 40) and all very good in grass—We started on the 40 mile stretch at four o'clock P.M. and our teams rested & grazed about 2½ hours & we came into camp on Green river, the next day at the same hour, all much tired—We had a beautiful night, the moon was at the full and the road fine—After a rest of two days we started over the mountains for this (Bear) river—Our first camp was made in this beautiful valley last night, and we are making short drives to take advantage of the splendid grass—Last night Hank caught a large string of speckled trout—They were eat with a good relish, I can assure you—By our taking this Cut off, I left the Mormon trail, before we met the Mail, and I may not have a chance to send this back, till I reach Fort Hall, some 100 miles ahead of us—We have come up with the Alton C° and find that the C° is split up, till but 10 wagons are left—Mr. Record, Pettingal & Johnson, are with them, but all the rest of the Macoupin boys are ahead —Buffum of Alton is behind us with four wagons—I have seen Gershom Blake often on the road, for the past four weeks—He was well & had been so all the trip—All of our mess are in excellent health—And dear wife, I can assure you that as these long, warm days pass away, I think much and often of you—If possible I would fain take eagles wings & spend one day at least, with you—But even if we wished, it is considered impracticable, now to take the back track—So many are behind us, that we could not get through—It is supposed that there is only about 1000 teams in advance of us—As yet the Indians do not show themselves on the road—Good bye for to day, dear Mary, for I am very tired,

ASCENDED A LONG ROCKY HILL



THE ROUGHEST HILLYEST ROAD



A GIGANTIC REGISTER OF THE TRAIL

THE PLATTE RIVER IS DEEPER HERE . . . AND NOT SO MUDDY

and hope to finish this letter, when I feel more like writing & before I reach Fort Hall—

The valley of Bear River which the Illinois train had now reached was their first experience of that loveliest of landscapes, a Rocky Mountain "park." The floor of the high valley undulated gently, lush with grass and flowers, the clear river with its sweet cold water rushed noisily over its brown stones, fir and cedar clothed the nearer hills and distant snow peaks swam in the summer haze. The emigrants drank in the beauty as their oxen did the water free from alkali. Some of them climbed the nearer summits to see what might be seen, others explored the strange hot springs that here and there cropped out from the grass, rearing crazy crowns of red or yellow mud frozen into carnival shapes, or hissed and murmured like imprisoned dragons, withering all vegetation for yards around with their noisome breath.

And, lest they think that their road now led through paradise, the Indians once more appeared, the Snakes, who called the lovely valley their own. Like the red men around St. Joseph, they were drawn largely by curiosity, and the worst disturbance they caused was by begging and thievery, but the miners found their depredations provoking enough. It was not until later that the Indians awoke to the fact that this stream of white men through their valleys, if left unchecked, would have no end until it swamped the land. Then their despairing hostility began, but at this time they still were watching the emigrants as a passing phenomenon which might be turned to advantage. All the annoyance they caused paled into insignificance in the Argonauts' scheme of things before the pest of mosquitoes. Mosquitoes arose from the damp grass about the river and its tributaries in clouds, to make life a torture whenever the wind was still, and Hackney in this respect tells the usual tale of the prairie traveler:

[July] 13

Our road today is still down the valley we struck the river about two miles from weare we started this morning it is about one hundred yards

wide and is a deep rapid stream the beare river is one of the principal rivers of the greate bason the river bottom is from 5 to 10 miles in width and is clothed with the riches kinds of grass bear river valley has always been a great recruiting places for the emigrants 14 miles brout ous to our camp on tomas fork this is another fine stream and runs into bear river all of theas streams are trout streams some of the boys caught some fine ones out of it Distanc 15 miles

[July] 14

Our rout to day was over another range of hills the valley hear is so narrow that you can not get through with wagons after travelling 12 miles we came down on the river again theare is a camp of Snake Indians heare we nooned close to thear camp they had a large drove of horses but would not sell or trade any of them they are the greatest beggers in the world they would come around wear we wear a eating and you could not get rid of them without giveing them something we camped on a small stream 6 miles from the Indian camp the grass is splendid distanc to day 18 miles

[July] 15

The grass is so good hear that we have concluded to lay by to day the goverment teams passed us to day as one of their teams was crossing the creek the driver fell under the wagon and the wagon run over him and broke his leg in two places thear is some fine fish in this stream greaser caught seven trout one of them weighed three pounds

[July] 16

Traveled 22 miles to day we crossed a number of streams this fore noon all fine water nooned at double creek burton shot five grouse while we stoped at noon camped for the night by a large spring grass fine

[July] 17

Drove 17 miles roade good we passed to day the celebrated beer or soda springs theare is over a hundred of them they ar on the bank of the bear river the water when you first dip it up sparkles and fomes the same as sodo it also tasts like sodo water only a great deal stronger

one mile and a half from theas springs is the steamboat spring this is the most singular one of them all this spring is on the top of a large rock and is hollowed out like a bason at regular intervals the water spouts up two or three feet high and makes a noise resembeling the scape pipe of a steam boat it then settels down slowly and in a few minutes tryes it again theare is also a tar spring heare somewears but i did not see it

1849
July
after leaving the soda springs we traveled 6 miles to weare the road leaves bear river we hear turned up a valley to the right thear has been some great eruptions heare some time we passed several places wear the earth had been rent asun[der] and left great yawning chasms you could not see to the bottom of none of them i threw a stone in one and it was some time before i could hear it strike the ground is covered all around with stones that have been thrown out by the volcano we passed another soda spring this after noon it was not quite as strong as those that we passed in the fore noon one mile from this spring we found a spring of good cold water and camped for the night grass is first rate

[July] 18

Went 16 miles over a fine road we had some trouble this morning to find our oxen theey had got up a hollow way out of sight and it was 7 o clock before we found them we nooned on a small stream water not very good the indians as usule came flocking in as soon as we stoped they all have good horses but you can not buy them at any price we are a geting sick of them they will stand by while you are a eating and watch every mouthful you eat and you can not drive them off without giveing them something one of them brout in a buffolo robe to trade for a shirt while he and one of the boys was a makeing a trade i was examing the robe i let it drop very sudden for it was the lousiest thing i ever saw the trade was broke off rather short we camped for the night on the heade waters of the pont neuf river have a good camp ground grass fine

[July] 19

Made 18 miles our road to da[y] has been over the dividing ridge that seperates the waters of the pacific from the waters of the great

bason it was about 4 miles from the foot whear you commence assending to the summit and about the same to the foot on the other side thear was some very bad places on the ridge and sharp turns in the road we nooned at a large spring near the foot of the ridge water very cold after we started this after noon charley warren and me started to cross a mountain before us the road run around it after a hard climbing we got to the top and had a fine view of the sourronding contry we got a sight of fort hall we estamated it to be 17 miles distant the snake river also was to be seen and the valley of the pont neuf river off to the right about 30 miles could be seen the famous three buttes we wear not close enough to give a discription of them we desended after we wear satified with looking and came into the road just as the train was passing camped on a small creek no wood but willows grass good

[July] 20

We followed up the creek this morning that we camped on last night for 5 miles we then left it and struck acrost a dry sandy plaine heare we had a hard time the sand was five or six inches deep and no water along the road besides this the sun come down scorching hot we stoped for an hour at noon on this desart to rest our cattel We them pushed on two miles and came to a fine spring of water and what was as good got out of the sand this is the largest spring that i ever saw and is a fine water as ever was drank thear is a numb[er] of springs about fully as large in five miles from the springs we came to fort hall this is a trading post belonging to the hudson bay company i was much dissippointed by the pla[ce] as by the talk i expected to find something of a fort it is only one building and built of mud, and is situated on the banks of t[he] snake river or as it is called by some lewis fork it is one of the branches of the clombin fort hall is by freamont called 1323 miles from the mouth of the kansas and they call it 600 from hear to sutters fort so that we ha[ve] accomplish over two thirds of our Journey the two companys of rifel men that came up with us are to be stationed hear thear is a number of lodges of snake indians around the fort they are like the rest of them the filthes devils i ever saw we camped four miles from the fort amonst a million of mosquitos they would not let you rest a moment and after swallowing a cup of tea and about fifty of them with it I bundeled up head and ears and let them sing me to sleep distan[ce] to day 23 miles

July in Illinois. The prairie south of William's house was shimmering in the afternoon heat. A faint breeze made its way through the open window in the gable-end and stirred their papers, but not one of the three took notice. They were busy writing letters. Willie in his high-chair at the end of the table was equipped with an old quill which his mother occasionally dipped in the ink for him. Solemnly, industriously, he was covering his paper with a complicated snarl of lines, accompanying the action with a running fire of talk addressed to his absent father. Mary made occasional notes of this babble, that she might be able to write a suitable interpretation of her son's missive. Tintie, however, had dictated a letter which Mary had written out in a large round hand. With this as a copy, the little girl was tracing uncertain characters, the pink tip of her tongue moving in and out between her parted lips in time with the cramping of her fingers.

Mary lifted her eyes now and again from her own closely written lines to smile at the other two. She felt satisfied that she was doing what would please Henry in giving the children a share in the precious postage to California, even though some more practical members of her family called the notion a foolish extravagance. The children had been delighted when she first mentioned the project and when there was discussion of depriving them of the privilege of sending their letters, their disappointment had been proportionately keen.

The two little notes would give Henry something to laugh over, Mary thought, and there was little matter for laughter in what she was writing, or in the days that had elapsed since Henry had gone away. She had a large budget of news for him but not much of it was cheerful. She sighed as she read the pages already written. Sickness, sadness, death, trouble, she could talk of nothing else if she confined herself to happenings in Woodburn.

The children had finished their tasks and were clamoring to go outdoors. Mary folded the two little letters, lifted Willie from his chair, straightened Tintie's dress, and saw them to the head of the

stairs. When she returned to the table, her thoughts had taken a new turn. Henry would be in the mines when he read this letter. What was awaiting him? That newspaper she had seen with its lurid account of sickness in the diggings, of the lawlessness rife there, and of trouble between Americans and foreigners, had frightened her. If only she could know that Henry was safe.

Her heart beating heavily with apprehension, she pled with him to safeguard his health, to avoid danger, and to hurry home. "Don't set your mark too high," she wrote. A little gold would take care of their debts. More would not repay them for the suffering of a longer separation. She supposed he could easily imagine the sadness of their hearts, all three, at this absence of husband and father. They missed him and they needed him. She filled a page with foolish intimate details, the new household things she had bought at a sale, the condition of the cows, the good behavior of the children. She spun it on, prolonging the joy of talking with him, while the evening sunshine slanting in the window made of her moving pen a long black shadow on a blood-red page.

* * *

The gold-seekers were already beginning to think of the object of their adventures, according to Hackney:

[July] 21

Lay by to day we have concluded to send two men on from hear to find out all that can be learned about the gold region so that when we get in we will no what to do we appointed Benjamin Gattan and Silas Goorich to go through we had an election for officer to day Dr. Knapp was elected captain and Lewis Jarbo As. Captain some of boys caught a number of fine fish hear we have been bother[ed] nealy to death by mosquoties all day and at nig[ht] they came swarming i never seen them so ba[d] before in my life you could not get rid of them no way we built large fires all through camp but it done no good the boys wear out of all patience and i never heard so much swearing in one while before

Fort Hall, the second great mile post of the trail, the two-third mark, was reached and passed. Belonging as it did to the Hudson's Bay Company, what post services it maintained were with Canada rather than the States, but, though it offered no chance for the sending of letters, it had news from the States as late as May, brought through no doubt by the quicker moving pack-trains of the traders.

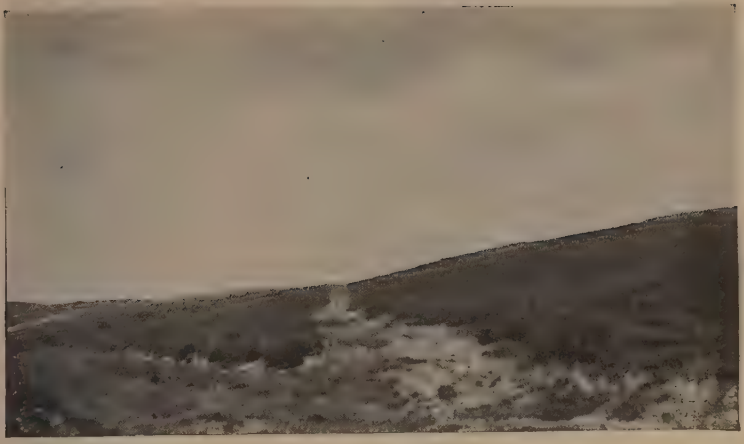
The news was disquieting indeed to the boys from Woodburn. The cholera was raging in the East and up the Mississippi Valley. New York reported 5,000 dead, and St. Louis only five hundred less, one tenth of her total population. The plague began first on the immigrant ships, and in St. Louis it got well started, for the authorities made light of it, calling it "ship fever." But by May 14, when the deaths mounted to twenty-six in one day, they tardily recognized the existence of an epidemic. By this time it was sweeping the town. An eye-witness thus described it in Scharf's History of St. Louis: "Funeral processions crowded the streets. The hum of trade hushed. The levee was a desert. Physicians kept continually on the move . . . some reeled through the streets like drunken men from sheer fatigue and exhaustion. Many touched not a bed for weeks." In the poorer districts whole families were swept out of existence.

Then, on the night of May 17, another catastrophe visited the stricken city, for fire broke out on the steamer *White Cloud,* one of the close-packed line of boats made fast to the levee. The steamers on either side of her caught, and when the firemen, thinking to isolate the flames, cut the hawser of one of these and turned it adrift, it was caught by the strong north east breeze and borne down on the shipping below. Other ships, cut adrift by their sailors in the hope of escape, became entangled with the burning vessels and so the fire spread. Twenty-three steamers, three barges and a small boat were totally destroyed. The stores on the levee could not be protected from the leaping flames as the intense heat from the burning ships drove the firemen back, and from the river front the conflagration ate its way inland. The whole Fire Department, consisting of nine hand engines and hose reels, were all out, but the

great heat turned the water to steam before it could be effective, and it was not until Tom Targee, captain of one of the companies began the dynamiting of buildings, an effort in which he lost his life, that the destruction could be checked. On the morning of the 18th, St. Louis took stock of the blackened ruins. Fourteen complete blocks were destroyed and parts of twelve more, the business district was almost entirely wiped out and the loss to be borne by a town of 45,000 in the grip of a cholera epidemic, was nearly six million dollars. The one comfort was that the number of lives sacrificed was only three, the disparity being due to the fact that the business district was the section hit, and the time was night when clerks and other employees had gone to their homes.

It was anything but cheerful news, this budget from Fort Hall, and Henry Page pictures what must have been the reaction of more than one man in his company, when he sat down to finish his letter. The scouts who were being sent ahead to spy out the mines and to advise the main company where best to settle when it should arrive, afforded the long awaited chance to mail:

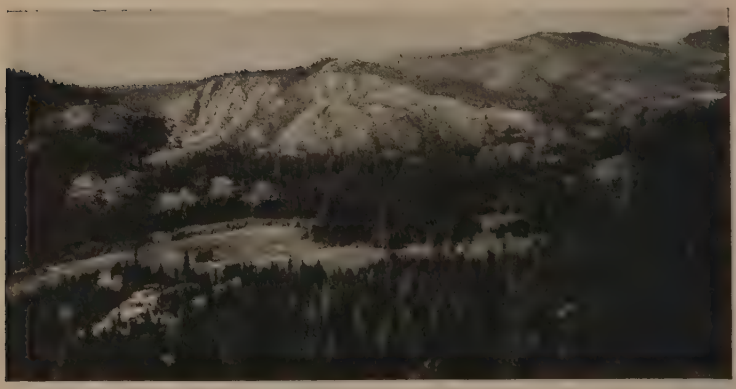
22 July—We are now one days travel west of Fort Hall, and two of our company have decided to go ahead by pack mules—and as this will bring you news from me quite early, I hasten to improve the time and say another few words before I send this off—I found that there was no chance to send letters from Fort Hall—We are now over 1200 miles from S[t] Jo & about 600 from the Gold diggins—At Fort Hall we obtained another yoke of oxen, with our horse—The team had become somewhat worn & wearried, and to make everything safe for the sand roads & mountains ahead of us—In about 6 weeks we shall be in California—& then for some news from my dear wife & friends—You cant think how eager we are to hear, for we have had news from S[t] Jo to the 29 May or later & heard that the cho[lera] was very bad (but it had not reached us by 600 miles)—of the Great fire at S[t] Louis &c—I am not very well today, but able to be around and will be well in a few days—A little fever caused by taking cold & two or three doses of medicine has set me straight—Henry & Tom & Judge are very well & if H & T can find time they will write—The weather is getting quite warm & we make most of our travel



THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

WE STRUCK GREEN RIVER

RAISED THE LEVEL IN THE AMERICAN RIVER



INTO BEAR VALLEY

in the cool of the day, laying by at noon for 3 or 4 hours—We have not heard anything from California since we were on the road—We are now on Lewis fork of the Columbia river, but shall turn south over the mountains in about 2 days—Judge Tappan wishes to be remembered to A M Blackburn—My best love to all friends and especially to all the relations in the homestead—And dear, a parting word to you, keep up your courage & remember what mother told us about my going—I have thought often of it & hoped you had—

Kiss the dear children for their Papa & dont let them forget him & I hope Willie & Cynthia are good children—Good by dearest & best of wives & write by every steamer—

Your husband

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}
ILLINOIS
U. STATES

Postmarked Sacramento Aug 20 Postage 40¢

CHAPTER VIII

In Sight of Gold

FROM Fort Hall, the trail Dr. Knapp's company was traveling followed the picturesque Snake River, with its falls and bluffs and rapids, to where the Raft River came in from the south. Not far from the junction with the smaller stream, a strange wall of rock came down from the high land to the river. A narrow opening not many yards from the water's edge permitted the trail to pass through as by a gate. Shadows of the jagged bowlders lay in sinister shapes across the road, and twenty years later the place was to earn an evil fame, when the Indians, made desperate by the ceaseless invasion of their lands, lay in wait behind this wall and annihilated an entire wagon train as it filed through the gateway, giving to the locality the name of Massacre Rocks. But all this was in the future when the Jerseyville boys passed and marked the place only as a milestone on their road.

At this point comes the first break in the series of Henry Page's letters, caused by the loss of his concluding narrative of the journey which was mailed in California, and which contained also his first impressions of the mines. Five of his letters, chosen because of some unusual interest and loaned to Dr. Grinsted to send to his English relatives, were never returned from England. But in this first instance, Hackney's Journal remained to complete the tale:

[July] 22

Our road to day was down the snake river we crossed pont neuf river shortly of leaving camp it is one hundred yards wide and a beautyfull clear water three miles from hear we crossed Pannack river this is another fine stream one hundred & fifty yards wide and runs very

swift after crossing this stream the road follows alone on the upland the valley of the river has fine grass and the upland is covered with sage we came down on the river batton at noon by a large spring after noon we followed down till six o clock when we camped grass good the mosquitoes plenty Distance to day 15 miles

[July] 23

Made 17 miles the road has been very rough to day in places some very steep assents to pull up we passed the american falls to day the river hiere has a fall of thirty feet over a rocky bed and tossed and fomes beautyful our express riders started on this morning they intend to make the trip in twenty days after they get through one of them is to return and met us and poilet us through we camped on the river and have very poor grass

[July] 24

We had some trouble a finding our oxen this morning they had scattered all amonst the bluffs two horses wear stole fromc a camp above us last night it was supposed that they wear stole by indians as a couple wear seen just before night a lurking around we crossed a rocky stream this morning which was very dangerous for wagons 5 miles from hear we crossed fall creek this is another bad place and the hill this side is the steepest that we have ever pulled up we nooned at the place weere the road leaves the river after dinner we went on half a mile when the road turned up a hollow which we followed up a mile hear the road assends to the ridge that devide raft river and snake we camped for the night on the opposite side of raft river the oregon road turnes off hear thear is a number of wagons camped on the river that inden[d] to go to oregon they are all family wagons grass is fine and our cattel are improving their opportuni[ty] by laying into it lustyly some of the pike county boys paid us a visit to night they brout a fiddler along with them and we all had a sociable dance amonst ourselfs Dictanc to day 14 miles

[July] 25

Traveled 12 miles our route to day was up raft river we crossed it once during the day the road was very good but terrible dusty we passed

three wagons that had been left on the road all good wagons we camped at noon on the river and lay by for the rest of the day grass first rate i forgot to mention that Lewellen Ansall was sent on with Gattan in place of Goodrich.

[July] 26

Traveled 18 miles we crossed the river 3 miles from camp and then left it for 8 miles the road was tolerable good with the exception of being rocky in places nooned on the river the new cut off came in heare it has never been traveled with wagons before this year and no wagons h[ad] gone through when we passed it by the beer sp[ring] the first train through was from Missouri it had an old mountainer for a guide crabb came the cut off and has got ahead of us came on 6 miles and camped grass fine another ox di[ed on] the road to day

The ambitious Crabb was evidently no follower, but rather a man of the stuff that goes to the making of pioneers. He and his partner Chapman appeared and reappeared, always experimenting and as frequently crowned with ill-fortune as with success.

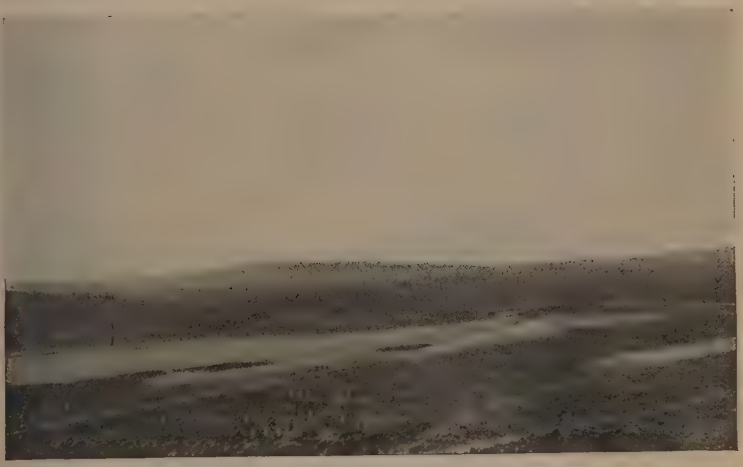
1849 July 27

Traveled 17 miles we crossed the river for the last time this morning and then struck off to a pass in the mountai[ns] we came to a small stream at eleven o clock and stoped for noon we crossed a number of small streams in the afternoon we then left the valley and went through another pass we have now to cross the ridge again to get to humbolts river and it is represented to be a very rough road we camped in a large bason soon after we got through the Pass, grass is tolerable good but not much water thear is a number of springs about but the water sinks after runing a few feet Jerome shot three grouse this afternoon this is the first fresh meat that we have had for a long time they are very good eating

[July] 28

Drove 20 miles we had a good road this forenoon and not very dusty the road from salt Lake came in to day a number of teams that turned off at the littel sandy the same time we weare thear and went by fort

CAMPED ON THE SWEETWATER



ALKALI LAKES LOOKED LIKE A BED OF SILVER

THE LOG STORE WITH THE PORCH IN FRONT

THE HOUSE BUILT BY HANK BURTON ON HIS RETURN FROM THE MINES

bridger came in as we pass to day they say that they had a good road and plenty of grass all the way the mormens told them that any man that could work at all could make a hundred dollars a day at the gold Diggins all of the mormens appeared to have plenty of the Dust sixty teams left salt Lake for california this spring our road in the after noon was down hill all of the way and some very bad hills to Decende we lost a yoke of our cattel weare we nooned we hunted all over for there bu[t] could not see any sign of them Jim Bowman then started on and overtook a train that pass us at noon with a lot of loose oxen and found them with it thear was a women a Driving them or i expect they would have got a good Cursing we camped for the night on goose creek grass is not very good it is reported that thier is men a diging gold on the head of this stream, and are a finding it very plenty i do not no how much truth there is in it but it is creadited by a number

[July] 29

As thear was no grass wear we camped last night we came on 5 miles and lay by for the rest of the day we are following up this stream it is not very large but very good water and has some fish in it an old mountainear told me that the first time he was hear the fish wear so plenty that they could dip them up with a basket but they appear to be scarce at present thear has been very few wagons passed us to day they all appear to be a laying by the days we lay by is not much rest to us we have our washing to do and also have our wagons to overhaul and clean up cooking to do and a number of other dutyes that keeps us buysy all day the grass here is better than last night but still is not first rate our wood is Dead willow a poor excuse for wood and is not to be compared with the wild sage

[July] 30

Traveled 17 miles the road followed up goose creek the whole Distance we had a good road all the way but the last 3 miles this was through a canon and was very rocky we crossed the creek 3 or 4 times before we got through it we camped weare the road leaves the creek theare is a number of springs around this has been a regular camping ground for all the trains and they have all eat the grass down close we had to drive our cattel over two miles to grass and not very good at that king traded

for a mule of an Indian at noon he gave the Indian a blanket and a few other trifels he made a good trade one of the boys also traded for a horse yesterday evening

[July] 31

We had a streach of 15 miles this morn without grass or water the first 2 miles was as rough and rocky as any road we had come over the balance of the way was good we stoped at one o clock at the warm springs at the head on the warm springs valley water was very good but no grass after resting our cattel one hour we went on 6 miles to the ice springs we filled our kegs hear and drove on one mile and camped grass not good as it has been much eat off Distance to day 21 miles

The trail had left the valley of Thousand Spring Creek and was climbing the shoulder of a ridge. A rocky ascent led to a high, fairly level plain below the mountain's beetling upper reaches, and here the emigrants were wearing themselves a path. Each year's trains followed in the steps of the last until the rut they were making became too deep for travel, then they moved over to form a new track beside the old. Eighty years later the great road could still be seen on the shoulder of that ridge, twenty-four pairs of ruts side by side, scarring the country like the marks of a giant comb.

August 1

Our road to day was along the valley no water but such as was standing in holes and it not fit to drink the road has been excelent we found wear a well had been dug and had good water in it and nooned in the after noon we passed a large spring the water good but rather warm from heare we drove on 4 miles and camped plenty of good spring water and the best grass we have had since we left bear river distance to day 20 miles road still fine

[August] 2

Made 18 miles to day we passed a numbe[r] of hot springs early this morning they wear hot enough to boil an egg in a short time within

fifty yards of them was an other spring of water as cold as ice we nooned at a spring at the foot of the ridge we have to cross to strike the head waters of humbolt river after dinner we starter over the ridge we had a good road acrost soon after crossing we came to the forke of the road the road to the right is the road the mormons made last spring it is only 4 miles to water while by the old road it is 15 or 20 it runs through a mountain canon and is said to be a rough road as we Had concluded to take it we turned off there has been no wagons gone over it since last spring as all the emigrants have gone the other road we camped on a small stream that flowes into the humbolt we had excelent grass and a fine camping ground the whole valley appears to be alive with grouse Jerome killed two of them and a large duck
1849

[August] 3

We had a canon to pass through this morning after traveling two miles we entered the mouth of it we had to cross the stream that runs through it nine times about half of the road was good the rest was awful the road in places was piled full of rock that had rolled down from the side of the conon and appeared impossible to take a wagon over but we pushed her through after we got through we came out on a bueaty-full valley thickly covered with grass and acers of wild flax we came into the old road again about 5 o clock and went on a short distance and camped on the same stream that we did last night we cut off about 20 miles by coming through the canon and had good water and grass all along the teams that went around have a number of sick oxen that got poisoined on the road we weare in luck in not going around Jerome killed four more grouse and a hare to day Distance to day 19 miles

[August] 4

Had an earley starte and went 11 miles the road was fine we crossed a large stream at nine o clock the grass is splendid all along the road i noticed to day large quanties of clover we camped at ten o clock and layed by for the rest of the day i done my washing and took a good swime burton caught a number of salmon troute they are a splendid fish

5
1849
August

Drove 12 miles and camped on the humbolt river grass is first rate pete[r] perrine rigged up his seine to day and m[ade] two hauls but did not catch any fish Jerome killed two Ducks in the river

[August] 6

Traveled 18 miles thear was an ox and a cow missing this morning and could not be found two men went back at noon to hunt for them and have not returned our road to day was over a number of hills in the fore part of the day we came on the bank of the river we had to cross two or three slues to get to the river and liked to mire our oxen in crossing them had splendid grass

[August] 7

The men who went back after the lost ox came back this morning without them they got on the track of them and followed it towards the mountain 5 miles and found weare the cow had been killed and the meat taken off and the ox driven on thear was a number of moccoane tracks about and it is no dought the work of the devilish diggers we crossed the river soon after noon and went on a mile and struck the mouth of a canon we had some very rough road through it and had to cross the river three times one of our wagons was upset in heare this is the first accident of the kind that has happened since we left St Jo thear was not much damage done only breaking the wagon bows and wetting the blankets we camped soon after coming out of the canon grass not as good as last night distance to day 20 miles

It was an easy matter to upset a wagon, for the river had cut a deep channel for itself, and great pieces of the cañon wall were in the river-bed to be a menace to even the most wary. At times the men were obliged to abandon the river completely, and with it the grass and the water, and to drive their oxen and heavy wagons up the cañon side to the alkali plains above. Then they saw marching with them on either hand the shapes of mountains, dark blue in the

morning, green of foliage and brown of rock in the revealing light of noon, amethyst and silver shapes of dreamland as the sun went down. At first these were the Ruby Mountains, again they were the Humbolt Range, and at last when the river turned southward, far to the west it was the peaks of the Sierras that lifted snowy crowns.

[August] 8

We followed down the river 6 miles this morning to weare the road leaves the river for 20 miles and no water for stock the whole distance we watered our oxen here and filled our kegs and went on we drove on till 10 o.clock at night before we struck the river from the top of the ridge down to the river through a canon was the worst time i have seen on the road the dust was a foot deepe for twenty yards on each side of the road and blew square in our faces Some times for half a hour you could not see an ox in the team thear was not a spear of grass about weare we camped and i expect our cattel will be well scattered by morning Distance to day 26 miles

[August] 9

as i expected we had some troubel a finding our oxen this morning we found them about 2 miles up the river they had got into tolerable good grass so that they did not do so bad after all we yoaked up and drove on till noon and then lay by for the rest of the day the grass along hear is parching up very fast and it is hard to find enough for the stock the indians are also getting to be troubelsome they are stealing oxen and horses every night they stole two horses from some packers last night they weare picketed within ten steps of weare they weare a sleeping and thear roapes wear cut and the horses run off distance to day 10 miles. Crossed the river again to day

[August] 10

Drove 20 miles over a good road we crossed the river again to day the Indians stole all off the mules from two wagons that we passed to day camped on the river grass tolerable good

[August] 11

Drove 17 miles we cross the point of a rocky hill and then turned a north west direction we struck the river at noon and continued down 7 miles and camped grass good

[August] 12

We continued down the river this morning 7 miles and nooned from hear the road left the river for 8 miles over a sandy road after we came to it again we followed it down a few miles and camped grass good we met a man to day that had been down to the sink he says that thear is no water nor grass for 65 miles after leaving the river at the sink the water is so strongly charged with alkili that the cattel will not drink it twenty-three miles from the sink thear is a number of hot springs that will do to drink by cooling it from thear to the truckies river 22 miles is the next water it is a going to be a hard pull to get through but still i think that we can come it he says that thear is over six hundred dead oxen on the last 15 miles before we strike truckies river Distance to day 17 miles

[August] 13

Drove 20 miles Road good for 12 miles we hear left the river four 8 miles over a sandy road thear was no grass wear we first struck the river so we had to go 2 miles down the river before we found any and it not very good we overtook crabb to day they are getting along finely chapman has gone on to the gold diggins.

[August] 14

Drove 10 miles and lay by for the rest of the day grass first rate Jerome kill three grouse along the river to day had a fine pot of soup at night

[August] 15

Drove 11 miles over a fine road we are driveing a few miles each day to recruite our cattel all that we can while the grass is good about fourty miles of our road befor we leave the rive is entierly destitu of grass and we will have to rush our teams over it as fast as possible and we want to get our cattel in a good fix to stand it and the 65 mile streach

[August] 16

Made 16 miles over a heavy sandy road we crossed the river in the after noon and had a good road the rest of the day grass not very good

[August] 17

Drove 12 miles and then lay up for the rest of the day the road hear leaves the river for 15 miles over a sand plaine the grass is not very good we had a small shower of rain this afternoon a very unusale occurance in this country

[August] 18

Traveled 17 miles over a dry sand plain the light shower that we had yesterday has been a heavy rain out on this plain the water stood in puddels and the dust is packed down we left the road about ten o clock and struck for the river we nooned on the river and then kept down the valley till we camped feed very poor and no expectation of it getting any better for the next 60 miles saw an elk and two antelope to day

[August] 19

Made 17 miles we passed in the morning the new road it avoids the deseart beteen this and truckies river and strikes feather river 150 above Sutters thear has a number of teams went that way and a good many are camped hear who are a goin to take it as we have concluded to keep the old road we passed it without stoping we left the river bottom after nooning and struck out on a high dusty plaine till near night when we againe made for the river it runs here beteen high sandy bluff and has no vegetation along but a few rushes and the willows that lines its banks every thing around has a Dreary Desolate look we found crabb and chapman camped heare chapman has been on ahead he took the new road and followed it for 60 miles he says that thear was no grass on the road as far as he went he turned back and had his team take this road

[August] 20

Traveled 19 miles this road runs over a Dusty Barren plaine the river runs beatten steep bluffs and can not be approached the road strikes

the river about 7 miles from weare we camped last night it then left it again for 12 miles we camped on the river weare we struck it the last time we found heare a numb[er] of wagons direct from California and bound for the mormon city & it raised quite an excitement amongst the boys and every one has already made his fourtune they bring the most favorable news they say that they average from one to three ounces of gold a day and plenty of it provisi[on] is plenty and selling very cheap the first teams came in to Sutter the same day that they left five weeks ago we are all now anxious to get through as fast as possable we have no grass againe to night and have to browze our cattel on willows we had expected to get to good grass to night but the mormons told us that it is 18 miles yet and it will take all day to morrow to get to it

[August] 21

Traveled 16 miles 10 miles broute us to a small stream of spring water it had a sulpher tast from heare we drove 6 miles to what is called the slough and found good feed frome here till 3 or 4 miles from the sink of the river the grass is boundless all of the wagons hear lay in hay enough to last them acrost the desart thear is a number hear at presant cutting and curing hay we shall go down 6 or 8 miles before we lay in our supply thear is a number of Indians of the ki utes tribe about thear are very usefull to the emigrants about getting thear grass acrost the slough you can get the[m] to wade over it and bring it to this side for a buiscute or an old shirt all day long

The Humbolt Slough, as the Journal indicates, was a stretch of marshland where the river still had its way before it sank in the thirsty sands. The abundance of grass and the necessity for providing against famine to come, combined to make it a resting-place for the emigrants second only in fame to the Truckee Meadows, the recruiting place on the far side of the desert.

[August] 22

Drove on down the slough 8 miles and camped we sent men on with sythes and have got our grass all cut it is the best grass we have seen on the river our cattel are laying into it finely and they need it bad

DOWN THE SNAKE RIVER

SHADOWS OF JAGGED BOULDERS LAY IN SINISTER SHAPES

A PASS IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE COUNTRY VERY ROUGH AND BROKEN

enough as they have not had a good feed for the last four days and will not have any more four the next three but what we can haul on the wagons the water is not very good and scarcely any wood

[August] 23

We have been buzy as bees all day a getting our hay and cooking up provision for the streach a number of teams have started out to day thear was an indian in camp to day that had been in california he made us understand by signs that thear was plenty of gold but said it was work heap which he did not like much

[August] 24

Rolled out at seven o clock and travelled 19 miles it was heavy hauling for the first three miles we then struck out on a hard barran plain not a spear of grass to be seen nor any water we watered our oxen at a well about 4 o clock water poor the water at the sink was so poor that we went on 4 miles to weare a number of welles had been dug the water had a strong sulph[ur] tast and part of our cattel would not touch it tied our oxen up to the wagon and gave them a good feel of hay and turned in for the night

The Humboldt Desert stretched a ghastly barrier across the road. Not a blade of sand-grass, not even a cactus cast a shadow. The ground was white and quick to turn to powder under the trampling of many feet, a powder that stung in nostrils and eyes, that settled in ears and hair and even penetrated between the teeth. Heat from the August sun, reflected from below, rose in visible waves, causing the distant mountains to shudder and dance, and making a hideously tantalizing mirage of water curling and breaking on the alkali flats ahead, water that retreated as the train advanced. Deeper under foot with every mile became the choking white dust, heavier with every mile grew its consistency until at the end of the second day it was dust no longer, but sand that slid under the feet of staggering oxen and men, slid and clutched again. A cruel up-grade was a climax of torture after the horrors of the flats, and only the beckoning green of the cottonwood trees by the Truckee River gave the strength to

flounder on. In meager words, Hackney hinted at the nightmare it was to the men who were forced to slog along on foot with the dust stirred up by the team ahead forever in their faces:

[August] 25

Started at five o clock and drove on our toilsom trip acrost the deasart we had a good hard road for the first ten miles and a good breese a blowing in the afternoon the road began to get sandy and the wind died away leaving it as hot as a oven a number of the boys had gone on ahead to the hot springs to cool water againe the teams come up they did not all come up till nearly sundown the boys had cooled water enough to give them a bucket full apieace theas spring are the greatest curorisityes i ever saw thear is over a hundred of them all of them boiling hot one of them is very large one another one boiles up in a hole about two feet over at stated times it dies entirely away and then in a moment it spouts up two feet and throws the boiling water for ten feet around the property that lays scattered around hear is increadable thear is over a dozen good wagons and by the old irons laying around at least as many more had been burnt up log chains cooking utencils and in fact everything that one can think of amonst other things i noticed a splend[id] turning lathe it could not have cost less then one hundred and fifty dollars we counted fifty four dead oxen between hear and the sulpher wells Distanc to day 21 miles

[August] 26

Left the hot springs at nine in the evening and drove on till one o clock when we stoped to feed our oxen one ox was left on the road we then pushed on till five in the morning when we came to a heavy sandy hill from this to the river a distance of 8 miles was nothing but sand from 6 to 8 inches deep two of the teams gave out before they had got one mile we passed thirty wagons that had taken thear cattel off and drove on to the river to water them oxen wear a laying every few hundred yards perfectly exhastred oxen would drop in the teams every mile some had lost every ox and had been forced to leave thear wagons after dragging through the sand seven miles we came in sight of truckies river thear was nothing in the whole world that i would have sooner

seen at that moment then it its banks wear lined by large cotton-wood trees and was quite a contrass to the wide dosolation behind us when we got to the river we could hardly keep our oxen out of it when we drove them in it done me good to see the poor devils drink out of ten wagons that left the spring seven came through and three left on the sand they told us hear that our train was the only one that had brout thear wagons through without leaving haff thear stock on the road the seven wagons that came in have all the oxen that they left the sink with but it was a trying time on them and i would not beleave that an ox could stan[d] the hardship that ours have without seeing it with my own eyes we found good grass by driving down the river 5 miles the water is splendid and the luxeary of laying under the shade of a tree no one knows but one that has traveled a thousend miles through the hot sun and not seen a tree large enough to shelter a dog a man was hear to day direct from sutters the news from there is still encouraging provision cheap and gold plenty chapman has not got in yet he came in to the hot springs last night just as we left them distanc last night and to day 22 miles

[August] 27

the boys started out after the wagons that wear left behind and have not got in yet our oxen happear to have got over thear fatigue and thear is no dought that they will all go through we have nothing now to dread but crossing the mountains the distanc from hear to the first diggins is only one hundred and twenty miles and 200 miles to sutters fort so that in two weeks or three at the most our long and tedious Journey will be ended this is a bauutyful stream the water is as clear as a chrystal it has a rapid current so much so that it is almost impossible to wade it the banks are lind with cottonwood trees wich have a pleasin appearance to all emigrants to Californie Jerome killed four hares and one grouse to day

[August] 28

As out cattel are tolerable well recruted we started on this mornin our rout was up the river we entered a canon after traveling one mile and followed it all day we had to cross the river eleven times in the course of the day and all bad crossings the bottoms wear full of large

rocks which with the rapid current made it dangerous for the cattel and wagons camped in a small valley wear we found an abundance of excelent grass distanc to day 17 miles

[August] 29

We did not start with the rest of the train this morning as two of the other teams wear a going to Joine and leave one wagon and as it was a better one them ourn we are a going to exchange we did not get all to rights till 2, o clock in the after noon when we rolled on we had to cross the river 5 times douring the afternoon and had some rough rocky road this is the first night that i have not camped with the train since we have been on the trip distanc to day 8 miles grass poor.

[August] 30

Drove on up the canon this morning and crossed the river 5 more times had a steep rockey hill to decend at the last ford we then kept on a mile and had another steep hill to come down after following on a short distanc we came out of the canon into a broad noble valley walled on all sides by lofty mount[ains] and covered with a luxurant coat of grass we found the train hear laying by we had a muddy slough to cross to get to camp thear was a man killed in it yesterday he was a crossing on a mule when the mule fell down and rolled on him and mashed him in the mud so that he died before they could get him out distan[ce] to day 7 miles

They were through the Truckee Cañon and out in the valley where the city of Reno now stands, with the snowy summits of the last divide before them, their lower levels clothed with such trees as these prairie-bred men had never known. The Truckee wound its way through the valley, and the river was still their road as it had been through the cañon. They crossed and recrossed it. An earlier journal of the trail counted forty-nine crossings in eighty miles, and Hackney made mention of twenty-six still in use in 1849.

[August] 31

Followed on up the valley this morning we got out of the good grass after traveling 2 miles and struck out on a rocky sage plaine we did

not touch the river for 8 miles and over the rockyest road that i ever saw we nooned wear we struck the river thear is a pitch pine tree hear the largest one i ever saw one of the boys mesuured it and it was near 6 feet in diameater we had to cross the river 3 times in the afternoon one of the crossings the worst one of the whole lot after crossing the third time we went a short distanc and camped grass poor distanc to day 16 miles

1

Crossed the river again this morning and drove on over a rocky road for 3 or 4 miles we then desended a steep hill to the river and crossed it for the 2" time after crossing we left the river and commenced the assent of the mountain thear is some of the finest pine trees hear that ever growed the whole mountain from top to bottom is compleatly covered with them we wound up by a gradual assent for 5 miles when we got to the summit we them had to desend for half a mile down the steepest kind of a mountain into a narrow valley a small stream of cold water run through it camped hear amonst the pine grass tolerable good distanc traveled to day 13 miles

[September] 2

Resumed our Journey this morning and made 12 miles over mountains and hills all coveded with the largest kind of pine trees we nooned on a small stre[am] that runs into truckye river camped in a nother small valley and found good grass and plenty of spring water we are now living on bread and coffee our sugar give out about a month ago and we eat the last of our meat last night it is poor living but we are living in hopes to get in next week when we can make up for it all

[September] 3

Drove 12 miles road the same as yesterday we crossed a considera[ble] stream in the fournoon and came down on trucky river at noon from hear we went on three or four miles and camped this is the spot wear the donner party perished in forty six the remains of thear cabins are still to be seen they were burnt by the order of General Kerney on his return home

The camp by the lake which the trail passed through was the one built by the main body of Donner's party. The leader with his

brother had been obliged to stop a few miles further back in the valley of Alder Creek. In 1849, the Lake Camp was still a recognizable place, in spite of the destruction mentioned by Hackney, a destruction ordered because the perpetuation of so tragic a story might act as a deterrent to the migration of colonists to California desired by the government. Another forty-niner, Nelson Kingsley, said that he saw the bones of animals which had been devoured by the unfortunate party lying about, that the ruins of the huts and the provision house could still be seen, and that stumps of trees twenty or thirty feet tall, chopped off with an ax, showed how deep the snows of that terrible winter had lain. He also repeated a statement which shows what exaggerations of the horror were even then current. "There only remained," said he, "one man, one woman, and one boy."

The most tragic element in the whole situation was the fact that Donner Lake was but six miles from the summit of the range, and two days' travel from the summit would have brought them to the first Californian ranch. But the last mile of that six formed the unsurmountable barrier. What Hackney laconically called the "main difficulty" was an unbelievable place, a steep ascent covered with loose rocks which must have rolled and shifted under foot. Only the mute testimony of the worn scarred stones could be accepted as proof that the heavy Conestoga wagons were ever taken to the top. With the drifted snow of winter it would be impossible indeed.

On the California side of the summit, beyond the mountain park where grass and "beautyful lakes" refreshed cattle and men, were the real "worst roads" of the trip, and the Argonaut by now was competent to judge. The Jerseyville boys were making this part of the journey on the short rations of bread and unsweetened coffee. Hunger was added to the other difficulties of the way.

[September] 4

To day we commenced the assent of the mountain a short drive of 3 miles brout us to the foot of the mountain by a gradual assent of four

miles over as rocky a road as one can well immagi[ne] we arrived at the main difficulty form hear to the summit one mile it is as steep as the roof of a house we doubled teams and by the hardest kind of scratching got our wagons up we then had to desend and bring up the rest former emigrants always unloaded and hauled the wagons up by roaps from the summit we desended four miles to a small valley and found good grass and camped for the night very well satisfied with out days work distanc to day 12 mile[s]

[September] 5

The first 4 miles of our road to day was good after that it commenced growing worse and was as bad as the worst road that we have ever traveled over we over took bill crabb to day he had broak one of his wagon tire we found good grass on the top of the mountain and camp we have passed several beautyful lakes today the water as clear as a chrystal from what we can learn the road ahead four the next twenty miles is the roughest road that ever was travel[ed] but it appears impossible that it can be any worse than what we have drove over this after noon distanc to day 10 miles

[September] 6

We found to day the worst road that ever an ox or wagon ever traveld we started early this and drove till sundown and only made 7 miles it is impos[sible] to discribe the road as not even a man immagination could picture it great rocks as large as a flour barrel would lay in the road so that you could not avoide them in one place we had to take our oxen of and lower our wagon down by rops as it was impossible to drive in the night we had to camp on the mountain side without a spear of grass we tied our oxen up to trees and let them brouse on grand rocks rather hard feed but the best we could do for them

[September] 7

Had a better road to day then yesterday but still had short streaches fully as bad as our worst yesterday our cattel look worse this morning than they have before on the road after crossing a very steep mountain we came down into another valley and followed it for one mile when we

came to good grass but no water but such as we can get by digging wells Distanc to day 12 miles

[September] 8

We had intended to lay by hear to day but our cattel begun to range about so in search of water that we had to yoke up and go on we drove on only 3 miles which brout us to bear river valley whear we found abundance of grass and water we had to lower our wagons down a very long steep hill by ropes several wagons had been upset on the hill

[September] 9

As we near the gold diggins we mett men returning every day to meet thear trains they all tell the same tale about the gold there is a store 25 miles ahead of us and no grass from hear down we gathered a lot of pea vines for our cattel all are eager to get through but the roads are so bad that it is impossible to make over 10 or 12 miles a day it is reported that 7 men are digging 3 miles from hear on the yuba

[September] 10

Our road to day was rock[y] as uesal and some very steep hills to pull up in the after noon we assend a long steep mountain and after winding along the sides for five miles camped for the night no grass had to cut oak trees for the cattle to brouse on water good distanc 12 miles

[September] 11

Traveled on this morning 8 miles to steep hollow road rough and the hill decending into steep hollow awful we hear saw for the first time the prosess of gold working a going on they wear a washing the dirt from the bank of the stream on wich they said that thear wear places very rich we all hear got out our pans and went at it and washed out a half a dollars worth in (no) time the first money i ever made out of the land in the after noon we went on and had another bad hill to assend and wear over two hours a gaining the top we then went a short distanc and camped our cattel are a getting very weak as they have had nothing to eat but oak leaves for the last two days and traveled over the worst roads that ever a wagon came over distanc 10 miles

TWENTY-FOUR PAIRS OF RUTS SIDE BY SIDE

THE RIDGE WE HAVE TO CROSS

WE HAD TO LOWER OUR WAGONS BY ROPES

ON THE BANKS OF BIG NEMAHAH

[September] 12

Pushed off this morning with the intention of reaching a grass valley some 8 or 10 miles distant and reach it before night thear had been good grass hear but it had been mostly eat off still it was better than none to our stariving cattel two of our oxen droped in the yoak to day compleatly used up we got one of them on to camp and left the other one behind the price of provision hear appears to me to be out of all reason only think of my having to pay one dollar and fifty cents for one quart of molasses and then they told that he let me have it cheap because he had a team of his own to haul his goods up with

The store where the indignant Hackney had made his purchases was the center of a small community of miners, called "Illinoistown," and here the Jerseyville Company found enthusiastic former neighbors ready to present the claims of their district as against those of the southern mines recommended by the scout of the party. Here there was gold and a chance to dig it. It would take their exhausted teams at least two weeks longer to reach the Stanislaus when every day before the winter rains set in was precious, and they might easily find after all, that they had gone farther only to fare worse. Thus the Illinoistown men argued with the fervor of minds already convinced. Dr. Knapp and the main body of the company, however, evidently voted to follow the scout's report and to push on to the Stanislaus, but two wagons elected to remain. Joseph Hackney went on to the south, but he ceased to write in his journal, ending it on the righteous indignation quoted above. Henry Page and his partners, Hank, Tom and "Judge," were among those who stayed. They must have watched the familiar wagons creak down the valley with mixed feeling. An epic chapter was closing and the close companions of more than four long months were passing out of their lives, but the main adventure and the reward of it all were still before them.

CHAPTER IX

Bearded Miners

ILLINOISTOWN was a typical mining community of 1849. The prospectors had come in armed with pick, shovel and pan, and taken up positions along the stream where there was the water necessary to wash their dirt. As soon as gold had been found, they followed the process which Paxton describes; they organized a "mining district and adopted laws determining the amount of running feet of river bottom each claimant was entitled to, and the distance up the hills either side that a claim might go. They decided how much work a finder must do to establish a claim and how much to hold it. They recorded on their informal books the claims and transfers and did the work so well that, when the law caught up with the prospectors, it was generally enough to give effect to agreements already in force. Mining law on the American frontier was a spontaneous growth, embodying some of the experience of Welsh and Spanish miners, but mostly representing practical adjustments reached on the ground by men used to self government."

When Henry Page and his partners had selected the locality where they chose to dig, they were faced with the problem of making some temporary arrangement for their oxen and the faithful old Conestoga. In their dilemma, they naturally went to the log store with its porch in front, which was the center of the place, whatever may have been its physical relation to the miners' shelters strung along the sides of the gulch. Here gold was brought to be weighed or disputes to be settled, for the trader was the one man in the community who was sufficiently outside the main occupation to be a trustworthy custodian or an impartial judge. Here was the mail-list on which were recorded the names of those who desired the express

rider to obtain their letters and papers from Sutter's Fort or the Post Office at "the Bay," as San Francisco was called. Here were the supplies that the trader had hauled out fifty miles by wagon from Marysville at the junction of the Yuba and the Feather Rivers, the distribution point for the "northern mines," as Stockton was for the communities on the San Joaquin and its tributaries.

The trader was ready with a solution of their difficulty. He would supply a driver to take their team to Marysville and to arrange for its safe keeping until they might need it again. Accordingly they unpacked the load for the last time, storing the few remaining provisions and their bedding in a tent which the obliging trader also probably provided for a price. The single shelter would do for the belongings of all four, as, while the weather held, the men could sleep in the open. When the rains began, it would be necessary to shift to other "diggings" in any case, and the less they invested in this first training ground the better.

The days were spent in learning the technique of their new trade, how and where to dig, but the evenings were free for association with other newcomers and the "Old Timers" of the camp. From the talk of these last, Henry built up a picture for himself of this California before the gold rush began, a cattle country with the great ranchos trading in hides and tallow, carrying these products to the few seaports Monterey, San Luis Obispo, San Pedro, and the rest, where vessels, mostly from Boston, picked them up and carried them to San Diego to be cured, whence they were shipped all over the world. There were tales of the sea beach at San Diego, of the curing sheds and the crews who handled them, Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands, to-day called Hawaii, rubbing elbows with the scoundrel and ne'er-do-weel, the restless off-scouring of Europe and the States. There had been struggles between the crews of various vessels to obtain the monopoly of the hides, thefts and counter-thefts, open battle and secret murder. There were tales of the life on the trading vessels plying back and forth between the Bay and San Diego, collecting and trading and filling up on the south-bound trip,

discharging on the beach by the curing sheds and returning to fill again, spending three or four years in such a round before setting sail for New England by way of Cape Horn. There were tales of the Spanish holders of the great ranchos who bartered their hides for the manufactured goods the trading-vessels brought, of their unhurried life, pastoral and patriarchal, of their pride and wealth, and always and most often of Captain Sutter, the "American Alcalde" of the north. Hardly a single old timer but could tell of having been welcomed and encouraged, if not rescued and protected, at some time by this friend of the emigrants. They described his commanding presence and his smiling face, his liberality and his boundless hospitality, his princely state in the fort by the river, surrounded by Indian herdsmen and white vaqueros and retainers, where a certain military discipline was manifested in drills and in sentries on the walls. They told of his orchard of peaches and apples, his vineyard of white grapes, and the farms he had wrested from the wilderness, where five hundred men were employed at the harvest, where wheat was threshed by horses being driven over it, two thousand bushels in a single hour, and winnowed by being tossed in the air on a windy day; and they came back again to his relief and assistance so frequently sent over the Sierras to the disabled wagon trains. They made of him a fabulous figure, but no tale they could invent would be a whit more romantic than the actual life of the man.

Johann August Sutter was born in Germany of Swiss parents. He grew up to be an ardent admirer of the United States and in 1834, being then thirty-one, he set sail for the land of his dreams. He landed in New York, but went on through to meet a friend in Indiana whom he helped to clear his land. For some reason, Indiana did not meet his expectations, and he pushed west to the Mississippi where, for some years, he had a home in St. Charles at the junction of the Missouri with the larger stream. His time, however, was mostly spent upon the trails. He traded along the Santa Fe route to Mexico, but with so little success that in 1838 he gave it up to accompany Captain Tripp of the American Fur Company to the

TRUCKEE CANYON

ON A LARGE BEND OF THE RIVER

THE MAIN DIFFICULTY

Rocky Mountains. When the fur trader had to turn back, Sutter threw in his lot with a small party of trappers who were going to Fort Vancouver and the Pacific Ocean. There he determined to make his way to California. There was no land route at that time, so he took passage on a vessel owned by the Hudson's Bay Company bound for Honolulu, thinking there he could easily find a vessel trading directly to California. But in this he was disappointed, and the best he could do was to ship as supercargo bound for Monterey by way of Sitka, Alaska. By this roundabout method, he finally arrived and obtained permission from the Spanish governor to settle in the Sacramento Valley. He explored the Sacramento, the Feather and the American Rivers, before taking up his land and buying Fort Ross, the southernmost station of the Russian Fur Company. Since the furs in the district had been growing scarce, the Russians were glad to leave, especially when they might profitably dispose of their fort, their cattle, and horses, their little trading vessel, and even the old cannon and the flintlock muskets which they told Sutter had been left behind by Bonaparte's soldiers when they fled from Moscow in 1812. So Fort Ross, re-christened Sutter's Fort, became the place of protection and the rendezvous for all Americans in California. From this center he sided with Mexico in her struggle to protect California from the English and French, he joined in the movement for an independent California under the Bear Flag before he was certain that the United States was coming in, and later rendered substantial aid and comfort to Fremont in his conquest of California. By 1848, according to his own account, he owned eight thousand head of cattle, two thousand horses and mules, two thousand sheep and one thousand swine, and he was at the same time the military commander of the district, the alcalde or civil ruler, and the Indian agent.

Sutter's various enterprises soon created a growing demand for lumber. His overseer Bidwell says he was always exploring for a sawmill site, but it was hard to find a place suitable for rafting the logs down to the settlements. At last a spot was selected some forty

miles up the river from the fort, and a man named John Marshall, who had been in Sutter's employ for three years making spinning wheels and looms with their reeds and shuttles, a versatile man who could turn his hand to anything, was sent up as mill-wright to superintend the building. He contracted with Sutter to build and run the mill and to divide the proceeds. He was to haul the lumber part way and then to raft it down the American and Sacramento Rivers to San Pablo Bay and San Francisco. "An insane scheme," declared Bidwell, Sutter's overseer, "because of the canyons."

Even in the building of the mill difficulties were encountered. The wheel had to be set so low that it would not turn, and Indians were set to digging a tail-race through the bar below. "As soon as the water began to run through the tail-race," says Bidwell, "the wheel was blocked; the gate was raised, and water was permitted to gush through all night. Marshall was accustomed to examine the race, while the water was running in the morning, so as to direct the Indians where to deepen it. The water was as clear as crystal and the current was sufficient to wash the sand. On one of these occasions he saw something bright and yellow. . . . The mill sawed little or no lumber," Bidwell concluded. "As a lumbering enterprise it was a failure, but as a gold discovery it was a great success."

In Sutter's Personal Reminiscences preserved in the Bancroft Manuscripts, occurs his account of how the news reached him:

"It was late in the afternoon of the 28th of January when Marshall dismounted at New Helvetia (Sutter's name for his community) entered the office where Sutter was busy writing and abruptly demanded a private interview. The horseman was dripping wet for it was raining. Wondering what could have happened, as but the day before he had sent to the mill all that was required, Sutter led the way to a private room. "Are you alone?" demanded the visitor. "Yes," was the reply. "Did you lock the door?" "No, but I will if you wish it." "I want two bowls of water," said Marshall. Sutter rang the bell and the bowls were brought. "Now I want a stick of redwood, and some twine and some sheet copper." "What do you want of all

these things, Marshall?" "To make scales." "But I have scales enough in the apothecary's shop," said Sutter and he brought a pair. Drawing forth his pouch, Marshall emptied the contents into his hand and held it before Sutter's eyes, remarking: "I believe this is gold; but the people at the mill laughed at me and called me crazy." Sutter examined the stuff attentively, and finally said: "It certainly looks like it; we will try it." First, Aqua Fortis was applied; and the substance stood the test. Next three dollars in silver coin were put in one of the scales and balanced with gold dust in the other; both were immersed in water when down went gold dust and up the silver coin. Finally a volume of the American Encyclopedia of which the fort contained a copy was brought out and the article on gold carefully studied, whereupon all doubts vanished."

This was not the first time Sutter had received reports of gold. In 1843, Baptiste Ruelle, a Canadian fur trapper at one time employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, had drifted into the fort. He claimed to have been in the Mexican mines at some stage of his wanderings and to know gold when he saw it. One day he had brought to Sutter some yellow grains which he said he found on the American River. He kept them in the quill of a turkey-buzzard's feather closed by a tiny stopper. He asked for an outfit that he might go and dig for more, but his demands were so ambitious that Sutter became convinced that the whole thing was a hoax to obtain equipment for migrating to Oregon and accordingly he refused his aid.

A year later, Mexicans reported gold on the Bear River, but the stirring days of the California revolt swept that fact from the Alcalde's mind. Now here was Marshall and substantial proof. For a time Sutter was uncertain of the value of the find and inclined to believe that the mill would pay more than any mine. The Mormon mill-hands, however, had different ideas and they used their Sundays and leisure hours in panning out gold dust which they brought to Sam Brannan, the Mormon storekeeper at the fort. Brannan kept the secret as long as he could, but in the end it inevitably leaked out, and the rush began.

There were numberless variants of these classic tales that Henry Page and his partners heard from the men in Illinoistown who had been on the ground the year before, but much as they might differ in regard to the details of the discovery, they all agreed as to its effect. Either Sam Brannan or Bidwell brought the word to San Francisco and all at once every one knew. Then every free and footloose man started for the American River, and the majority of those who were tied set about the task of severing their bonds. Some settled up their affairs, others merely deserted a now irksome employment. By the first of June San Francisco "wore a desolate and sombre look," as the California Star complained, a large number of the houses were tenantless, shops closed and many trades suspended or frankly given up entirely. A placard in a window "Gone to the mines" was sufficient explanation for any cessation of service. As the news traveled, the prospectors came from farther and farther afield. Hawaiians and Chinese came from the curing-sheds at San Diego, Mexicans and South Americans as well as emigrants from Oregon came in by ship, and passengers and crew alike journeyed to the diggings. The water-front at the Bay was lined with ships laid up because no one could be found to man them. The Presidio was deserted by many of its soldiers as were the nearer forts along the overland trails. Mail steamers sent out from New York, before the excitement began, to be ready to carry the last lap of the newly inaugurated mail service from the Isthmus to San Francisco, first heard of the discovery in South American ports, yet at Panama they found already vociferous hordes of goldseekers from New York and New Orleans, all demanding immediate transportation. Every ship which entered San Francisco harbor was filled to capacity and beyond, and still they came, from China, Japan, Hawaii, and from the Eastern states by way of the Isthmus and finally around the Horn. The water route by way of the Isthmus was the rich man's method of travel, for, though quicker and easier, its cost was prohibitive for most. The gain in time was noteworthy, for the first of the steamers from the Isthmus discharged her passengers at San Francisco on

February 28, 1849, while the earliest wagon train to arrive was some six months later. Those had been stirring days and the "Old Timers" did ample justice to their theme.

* * *

Mary standing on the top step before the door looked across the fields. The early September heat had abated somewhat and there was almost a breeze. She would just have time to walk over to the farm and transact her business with Mrs. King, before she must be at home to assist with the preparations for the evening meal. As she crossed the yard Willie detached himself from the group of playing children and ran to meet her. He scanned his mother's bonnet, and touched the crisp folds of her dress. In reply to his questions she said she was taking a walk and that he might come with her if he wished. She would not tell him where she was going but she was sure he would know the place when they reached it. Willie took her hand and together they entered the footpath which made the short cut through the fields. Here there was much to attract a small boy's attention, from the yellow black-eyed Susans growing in clusters in the grass to the grasshoppers that made explosive leaps from under his feet. He trotted ahead and Mary thought how Henry would love to see the square little figure. He surely was getting big. That jacket was really too small for him now. This coming winter would be the last that she could keep him in skirts. He would have to put on trousers in the Spring, and his mother would lose her baby.

The footpath came out upon the road. John Gragg's place was on the right and her house, Henry's house, was just ahead. They crossed the lawn and passed around to the back. Mrs. King would probably be in the kitchen. Willie was close at her side now, looking about him with eager eyes in which yet a shade of perplexity lingered. They entered the kitchen and the two women talked. Willie had nothing to say until they turned to leave, turned their backs on the bewildering array of strange furniture, and faced the open door,

and the garden which Henry had made, the barn and the corner of the pasture. Then he gave a sudden little crow of delight.

"Oh, I know!" he cried, flinging wide his arms, "Papa and me work in the fields and mama cook dinner."

He remembered it all now and his excited little voice went on and on. But Mary scarcely heard. Standing now at the familiar back door with the garden before her and the pasture unchanged in the late summer heat, she sensed a strange comfort stealing over her. Henry was not gone. It was all some evil dream, the quarrel, the breaking-up of their home, this sorrowful summer. Henry was just in St. Louis, he was near. He would be back to-morrow or the next day or the next. Mary hardly dared breathe lest she break the spell.

But Willie was tugging at her hand and Mrs. King was speaking. She must apologize for her absent-minded behavior and leave. Reluctantly she withdrew her eyes from garden and pasture, but the sympathetic understanding in the other woman's face brought the tears dangerously near the surface. Hardly knowing what she said she hurried away, and each step seemed to be taking her out of the comfort of her dreams into hard reality.

* * *

Meanwhile Henry and Hank, Tom and "Judge" were making some headway in their progress from the state of the raw beginner to that of the experienced miner of gold, at the expense of considerable skin and temper. Henry also paid for his knowledge, such as it was, with a return of the old trouble with his back, which at times was so great that he could not work. After four weeks the crew from the second wagon of the Jerseyville train moved on, which left the four partners alone and shorthanded. They were nerve-wracked by the super-human exertions of the trip and harried now by what they considered a driving necessity to accomplish the utmost possible before the approaching rains should end their chances in this gulch. However unavoidable the ill-health which caused it, there was bound to be on the one hand a smothered irritation at the depletion

of the precious common store of provisions by one who could not take his full share of the common labor, and on the other a resentment at implied blame for a physical handicap. The smouldering feeling flared in at least one quarrel where old scores were reviewed and uncomplimentary opinions exchanged without censorship. Perhaps it was as well for the future relationships of the four that the rain came early and drove them from their labor.

They did not abandon their claim, for they left their tools with a neighboring company of miners to be available should they return in the Spring, but they packed their other belongings on foot along the traders' road to Marysville, where they found their wagon and oxen, not without difficulty, and so drove on to Sutter's Fort.

The Russian fort, renovated and enlarged by Sutter, covered an acre of ground. It was an adobe rectangle with walls twenty feet high and square bastions at the two diagonal corners, capable of being a refuge for the population of Sutter's principality in time of stress. It had fallen now from its high estate, for Sutter had withdrawn in disgust from the clamor to his farm in the interior. He had been deserted by his laborers, overrun by the immense migration which used his land as a camping ground without any regard for the rights of property, driving their wagons in on cultivated fields and pasturing their starving oxen on his crops, stealing or driving off his horses, butchering his cattle and selling them for meat. His house in the center of the enclosure was used for a boarding-place where Rufus Hitchcock charged forty dollars a week for the barest necessities. The blacksmith's forge built against the wall inside was still at its old work, but the other white-washed huts which Sutter had used for storerooms and for houses for his retainers were now shops for the thronging miners.

Sacramento City as the new collection of tents and shacks was ambitiously called was laid out on the river some two miles west of the fort, and was already a bustling center for merchants, traders, and purveyors of miners' supplies. It already thought quite as well of itself as Henry's pretentious date-line would indicate:

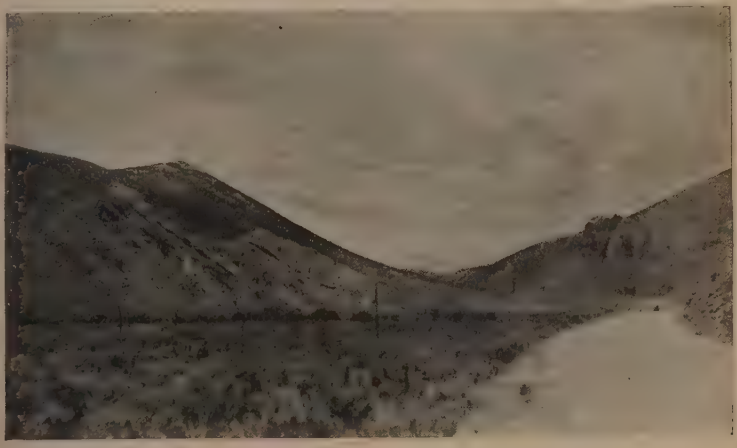
CITY OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
22 NOV. 1849—

DEAREST WIFE

Once more, am I seated in the old wagon, on the morning of a bright sunshine day, to hold sweet converse with that good and adored wife, who mourn's the absence of her husband—We have not yet had a single line from any one in the States, and I can assure you, that I long, long for a single scratch of the pen from you—I have no doubt, of your writing, but we are not able to get the letters from the P. O. in San Francisco unless we make a trip to that place on purpose—and that would cost some $100 from this place to the Bay & back again—We have sent orders to the Post Master at San F. to have our letters forwarded to this P. O. but he pays no attention to the business—And last night, we made another trial with the express agent, and we will know on the 27th whether he succeeds or not—But as the Steamer leaves San F. for the states about the first of each month, I cannot wait his return, and thus as we most anxiously desire, have your letters, but write this at this time, so you may be sure & have a line from your absent Henry by the Dec Steamer—When I receive your letters, I shall again write, not as now, like a blind man, uncertain of his footsteps, but as one who has the full light of noonday, to aid him—I feel that six or seven months, without one word from you, is almost too much for even me to bear, and I should fail, if I attempted to describe to anxiety and that has been the constant companion of my breast, about my dear wife & children—Often when at work, and through the waking hours of the night, have I been almost overcome with fears & fancies that have filled my whole soul, concerning the loved and absent ones—And although I wrote you three or four letters before we crossed the mountains, one of which was forwarded & mailed here, and one dated on Bear River in California, also mailed here, some of which, I hope you have recd ere this—If not, what your feelings must be, I can hardly imagine—But I can hardly believe that all, or even any of them have failed to reach you—I would give fifty dollars, if I had all the letters you have wrote me since I left—

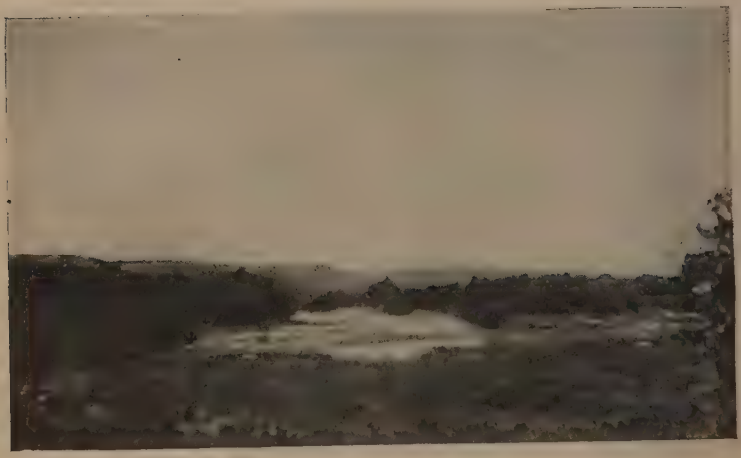
About the 6th of this month we left our diggins on Bear River, and made our way down from the mountains to this City—We did not think it advisable to winter on Bear River, both on accont of the high altitude & northern situation of the diggins, and of the scarcity & high price

THE HUMBOLDT DESERT STRETCHED A GHASTLY BARRIER ACROSS THE ROAD



WE CAME IN SIGHT OF TRUCKIES RIVER

THE ELLETT PLACE



TRUCKEE MEADOWS

of provisions—We, as well as most of the miners have been greatly disappointed, by the rainy season, commencing on the 1st Nov instead of the middle or last of Dec, as was the case last year—We stayed in Bear Valley as long as our provisions held out, and untill the rainy season had fairly set in—We then packed up our tools, and left them at a cabin of another company of miners, and made packs of our clothing and bedclothes, and started on foot for the valley of the Sacraimento River—In two days we came fifty miles, to the place where we had sent our wagon and cattle—We each carried from 25 to 30 pounds and came into our wagon limping and leg weary—In about one week we succeeded in finding all of our oxen, after hunting over an extent some ten miles long, by five wide—We then started for this city, and arrived here some three days since—At this season, you will remember that it rains about one half the time, and that the whole country is covered with water & mud—The soil, except on the banks of the large streams, is not fertile enough to form a sod of grass, on account of the long dry season, and when the rain commences to fall, it is like travelling over a field of newly plowed ground, and if our team leave the beaten road, they frequently mire down—But on the banks of the Rivers one can get along, with a team quite well, if he did not have to make out on the Praries to head the back water in the sloughs—The timber lands of this country from this to the mountains are of two classes only—One the Pine timber of the high mountains, and the other the Oak timber of the valleys—the latter confined to a narrow skirt of oaks on the streams of these large valleys & the former to the pines of the high altitudes—The general character of the Pine region is sterile and barren—a red, clay & sand stone soil, entirely devoid of grass except, around the springs and in some scattered valleys—That of the Valleys is very fertile where the water has an effect on the soil—that is along the banks of the Rivers, but after one goes back from the River from ½ to one mile, one strikes another soil that is so parched by the summers heat that it will never be fit for cultivation—Perhaps by irrigation, much more of the land might be cultivated—But we have a poor chance of judging about the fertility of the soil at this season, for this is the commencement of the rainy season, and the grass is just putting up, and the weather is warm and like your March and April—This is the seed time & the harvest is gathered at the end of the rainy season, say in

May & June—Here they rarely have any colder weather than a heavy frost of a night—Until I came to this clime, I could not so forcibly understand the prayer of the Israelites for the "early and latter rains"—"early" so that, the grass might again shoot up from the parched soil & the "latter rains" so that the vegetation might longer continue—We have days of heavy rains, and days of showers, and days of sunshine, and days of mist, most beautifully mingled together Such is our season at present & such no doubt it will continue till March—

On account of health, I was not able to work a part of the time we were in the mines & therefore my portion of the Gold, was smaller than that of the others—Up to the 10th Oct, when the four working with us Woodburn boys left us; on account of our inexperience, our success was small, very meager were the earnings of us all—I lost some 5 or 6 days working time, of the 24 working days up to that time recd only $69 after paying all expenses up to that time—Having learnt somewhat about the good places to dig, and having more experience, I was able to leave the mines, not working myself after the 31st Oct, and loosing some time, before then, from poor health, with some 280$ in my pocket—The other boys had some $100 each more than I had—With this sum I will be able to take a good start for the dry diggins through this winter, and no doubt be well fixed [fo]r next summer. In the winter the miners, work only on the small branches, and dry streams, called dry diggins—In the summer they leave these, on account of the want of water, and dig on the bars and banks of the larger streams—I have great confidence in my success, in being able to make a raise in California, and would not have you judge of my final success, by that of a raw, new, and not healthy person —such as I have been this fall—Since I wrote you from Bear R[ive]r I have been troubled a good deal with my back—brought on [no] doubt [by] labor, when not sufficiently recruited from the fatigue of the t[rip] and weakness caused by ill-health—Therefore when not feeling well, I would not work, and the consequence is, I am a little short in funds, but greatly ahead in health—Since I left the mines, I have walked from 25 to 15 miles every day that it did not rain, and by this kind of exercise, I have improved so fast, that, the pain has entirely left my back, and it is getting quite strong again—So much so, that I hardly know my back has been so weak—I have wrote plainly about this, and feel sure that it

was only a weakness lingering about my system, from which my present life of rest, will effect a permanent restoration—I am not too sanguine, I trust, on this point and am surprised at my improved & I may say restored health & strength. Othello is himself once more.

I wish that in the matter of dollars, that I now write, and may hereafter write about, that you will keep a closed mouth on the subject.—I always have and always shall, let you know every thing that concerns *our* affairs but think that perhaps we had better keep such things to ourselves—I hope to go home with a goodly purse, and if I do, or do not, you will know all about it, but it is not best for others to know how much or how little I may bring—I feel that if I have my health, I am almost sure of making largely, while here—But we will not calculate too much on anything about the future, but I will do my best, to place us, in a situation of more comfort & free from debt—

23 Nov.. I was called off yesterday before I had filled the sheet, and gladly take a few leisure hours of to-day, to write you, which, now that I am without news from you, affords me the only consolation I have—for next to reading letters from you, the greatest pleasure I have, is to set down and write, which I know will also afford you great pleasure, if you are so fortunate, as to receive the same—I dont believe the old saying "that absence, cures love," for I can truly say, that my love for you, is, if possible, increased one hundred fold—I enjoy much pleasure in anticipating the many, as I trust, long years, we shall each be permitted to enjoy in each others society—Many things have been very unpleasant, for you, caused by my perverse disposition, and I look back with sorrow and pain upon those times, and although knowing full well, that all is forgotten by your forgiving heart, yet I cannot but think of them, with tears of repentance, blaming only myself, and having a stronger and stronger resolution & determination to care less for self, and more for (see first page at the bottom) that dear wife, who so often calls me, by the endearing title of Pagey—Yes dear Mary, in this respect I trust, if we are permitted again to meet on this earth, that I shall be such a husband you deserve to have—You must bear with me, while I thus pour out the full feelings of my heart to you—and I will stop your answer with a kiss of affection. The Judge [Tappan] often sings of her "whose eyes are so bright That they shine at night, When the moon am

gone away" and I never hear the words, but that I think of my best of wives, and wish I could cover with kisses those, "eyes" that to me "are so bright" that, they may be truly be considered as giving me light, at all times; to enable me to walk more guardedly, and in such a way, as will cause the smile of approbation, to cover your countenance—

I suppose from what Henry & Tho^{s} have said, they will not write untill they get letters from home, and that may not be in time for this next steamer—And after reading this letter over, and marking such places as are not for public ears, I have no objection to your reading the rest to all the good friends, at Rider Hall,—Such if you wish may always be your course—not on my account, but only to give satisfaction & pleasure to those who are near & dear to me—Van Dorn & Henry are both very well, and anxiously waiting a letter from their wives—

Van Dorn and myself have not agreed very well, on the trip and since we have been in the mines—But of late things have gone on better —He rarely agrees with any of the mess, in most questions that are necessarily discussed, about our business &c and to keep peace, I have lately succeeded in keeping my own mouth shut—and let him have it, with Hank & Judge—The rest of us get along very well, but Van Dorn, is of such a captious, dictating turn, that everything must be done in his way, or he talks long and disputes much on the subject—I did think before we left Woodburn, that he had forgot his old grudge against me, from his cordiality towards me, but I was sadly mistaken, and find out, that he has the vindictiveness of an Indian—Therefore for the future I shall & do have as little to say to him as possible and shall never consider him a friend to me & mine & after I return to Woodburn, shall seek nor desire to have any further intercourse with him or his—Such is my full determination & (see one page back) though it may cause pain to you, to not be on intimate terms with his wife or him, yet I should much desire that such might be the case—But this can be talked over, when we meet—With one who says, and says he believes it, that I *perjured* myself by false swearing at the time I sued him for the $500 he owed me, when I swore that he owed me that amount, and had his notes for that amount,—When he says thus about me, I think the less we have to do with each other, the better—And as long as he looks upon your husband with such an evil eye, is it best for *us* to have anything to do

with him? I think not—If I had been guilty of what he says I am, I should now have been in the Penitentiary, but I have as clear a conscience on that subject as when I should say that two & two make four—

Yet notwithstanding all this, because we do not think it best to sell our team & wagon at present (although we have had $900 offered for the same) we will all four buy a small load of provisions, and go together into the dry diggins, on the American River, some fifty miles only from this place—We will mess together, but not work together—That is each one will have what he can make, & pay only his proportion of the expenses of the provisions—We shall leave this city in four or five days, and make the best of our way, through the mud and water, with a load of only 1500 pounds, for our four yoke of oxen—

This place contains, it is said, about 5000 inhabitants, and 99 out of 100 of the dwellings, are either tents, or slight frames, covered with sail duck—Lumber is worth here sixty dollars per one hundred feet or $600 per 1000 feet—Sail Duck is worth $1.00 per yard Flour $30.00 per barrel —Pork $50.00 per barrel—Bacon 40 cents per pound Sugar 25 cents per pound, Salaeratus $3.00 per pound—Dried apples 65 per pound Potatoes 30 per pound—Clothing is cheaper in proportion than food—Boots are very high, I have on, a pair of extra good, double soles, lined uppers, and long legs, that I bought second hand, from one for whom, they were too small, at what we considered the low price of $25.00—Common coarse boots can be bought from $14.00 to $18.00 per pair—Heavy wool blankets are worth $20.00 per pair—

Our living, cooking for ourselves cost us about one dollar each per day—and if we boarded at a decent table, & sleep ourselves, we (see back) would have to pay $24.00 per week each—

The best of love to all the dear ones at Rider Hall, and a thousand fold for the dear children & yourself—

Your husband

HENRY

P. S. I think that by this time Tinta must be able to read quite well—tell her I hope so—I shall expect to see her, quite a young lady sewing & knitting, reading & writing—You will try, wont you dear Tinta? And Willie must also learn to read his letters—And both I hope are the

best of children—loving & obeying their dear Mama—and loving & not forgetting their dear Papa—Write in every letter, by every steamer, fully about all your concerns about money matters &c If I have any way to send safely to you, I may before I send this enclose a check, but cannot tell, untill we have made our purcheses—If I say nothing about it, you will know I cannot find a safe way of sending the same—Good bye—

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}
ILLINOIS
UNITED STATES postage 40¢

It is difficult, as a rule, to place any particular one of the thousands of "Dry Diggings" of 1849, for all the early mining communities frequently changed their names, but the Weaver's Dry Diggins, to which Henry and his partners made their way fifty miles east of Sacramento on the American River, may be identified as Weber's Dry Diggings, now known after various name changes as Placerville. The mistake in the surname would be an easy one to make as the title was one already discarded for the more popular and distinctive "Hangtown." Henry chose the name which he had heard used once or twice by old timers to avoid the chance of Mary's identifying the place as the one notorious for the first mob trial in California, where men had been hung without the protective preliminary of court action. Not being able to understand the quality of the law of the frontier, she might be needlessly anxious for his safety. So he dated his next letter "California" and refers to his camp by an innocuous if disused caption:

CALIFORNIA 16 DEC 1849

DEAR MARY

Once more I set down, to scratch a few lines, to the dear wife of my bosom—I wrote you last, from Sacramento City, about the last of Nov, since which time, we have laid in our stock of provisions, and are now about fifty miles east of that City, in what is called the Weaver Dry

Diggins—The rainy season has fairly set in, and only about half the time will be able to work—We will have a cabin, and thus be sufficiently protected from the wet—We are on the hills, or spurs of the mountains, and probably have had as cold weather, as we shall have this winter—When not raining, it freezes at night, sufficient to form ice about the thickness of a dollar—It is not probable that we shall have much snow—and what may fall, will melt before one day's sun—This can truly be called the summer side of the mountains, for although the high-tops of the Sierra Nevada (Snowy Mountains) are for nine months of every year clothed with their white mantel of snow, yet the valleys are very rarely visited with a snow squall—It is much warmer at Sacramento, than here, and when we left the City, the grass was quite green, and the sap had commenced ascending the trees—Thus within 70 or 80 miles travel, you can find summer and winter—

I was not able when I last wrote to find any safe way, of sending money to the states—There was but one person in the City, drawing on the states, and I did not think best to risk sending his drafts—If I had gone to the Bay, I could no doubt have found safe remittances—We were not able to obtain, any letters from the states before we left the City, and now more than eight months, without one word from our dear friends—This dear Mary is the hardest part of my lot, to be so long without word from my dear family—Even newspapers I have not seen of a later date than the 30 June—We have heard that there was 28 deaths in Alton, from the Cholera, and that for a time they died in S^{t} Louis at the rate of 100 per day—This is the sum total of our news from your neighbourhood—And this you may well think is just enough, to make me anxious to hear more. This is the fourth letter that I have wrote you since we arrived in Calafornia—and I may have to write many more before I can have the great pleasure of reading a line from you—My thoughts are continually upon you & the children—My dreams are entirely about my family—Sometimes I think I am with you & the children & the other dear friends—Night before last I woke calling Tinta & Willie—Once I woke, asking the blessing at our table—In truth I am more anxious to hear from you, than I ever was, to have any thing in this world—Money is no object, when put in comparison, with the desire & anxiety I have to hear only, that you are well—And I spare no pains to effect

this object—I have sent to the Bay as yet, without success, but I send this letter by an acquaintance to the Bay, and if possible he will get my letters from that office—You will remember to direct your future letters to Sacramento City, and from thence we hope to be able to get, our letters—The Office is so poorly managed at the Bay, and they have such large mails, that it is almost impossible to get a letter, unless you are there in person & then one is not always successful—When your letters arrive at S. City, I will be able to get them quicker, and also save, the sending, to the Bay—I trust you have wrote by every Steamer, and hope you will continue to write at least every month, and if by every Steamer, twice each month, so much the better—I may thus be able once in a quarter, to get a line from you—I presume that the present Congress will set matters straight about our Post Office arrangement, and also give us a Mint, so that we will be able to get something near the value of our Gold—Now we get 16$ per oz. while it is worth in the States $20—

My health is entirely restored, and I am getting as fleshy as ever—Good appetite, regular habits, and rugged—Hank & Tom & Judge are each in good health—With one exception, I do not see but that we all look as of old—and that is our beards—A razer has not been used by any of us since we left S[t] Joseph, and with the help of shears to keep the road open to our mouths, and a little trimming to keep our faces a little ship-shape, we are at the top of the fashion—Not one man in a hundred that is this country ever puts a razer to his phiz—The truth is, something looks wrong if I see a white shirt or a shaven face—But although my beard grows thus luxuriantly, I am fast approaching the situation of Uncle Ned who "had no wool, on the top of his head"—My hair comes out by the handful, and at the present rates little will be left on *"top* of my head," at the end of a year—I am in hopes it will soon stop, and not make me a bald headed man before I am thirty five—

We have not been able to find our cattle since we turned them out after our arrival here, and on account of the rain have done nothing at Gold diggin—On account of the early rains & bad state of the roads, before we left Bear River, we came to this part of the mines not because, we thought them the best, but because we could not get, to any other point—And if we make our living this winter, will be satisfied———I do not

know whether Henry will write to his Teeny, but I shall let no opportunity pass, without sending a line to my dear Molly, and hope she will be as faithful—I am so sure that I have letters from you, at the Bay, that I am almost tempted to make the journey to get them—This would cost one hundred Dollars, but this longing, anxious desire, to hear from my dear wi[fe] almost overbalances all other thoughts—I will have to wait patiently till the return of the man, who takes this down, say till new years, and then if my hopes are realised, what pleasure I shall have, in treasuring up in my memory the lines you have penned—But imagination is not idle, in picturing before me, the varied situations in which you may all be placed—The question arises, are they all alive, and well? Does Father's & Mother's & Aunt Pheba's health continue as good as usual? Does W^{m} & Corinth & their little ones, still hold their good health? And not in the least does the question arise How is, and how fares, the dear wife of my choice & delight, & those dear little ones, Tinta & Willie? Are you all in good health &c &c, without end, are the thoughts that run through my mind—But I am fain to content myself, until I can hear, knowing that you are all under the care of a kind Providence—And there I leave you, praying that we may all be preserved in safety & pemitted to meet again on this Earth & at last in Heaven—Love to all—

Your affectionate husband

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}
ILLINOIS

By express to be Mailed at New Orleans or New York } Postmarked "New York Ship" postage 40¢

In the search for a cabin necessary for shelter in the rainy season the partners moved a few miles south and east to Mud Springs, later known as El Dorado. They were now some five or ten miles from the place where Marshall first saw the gold, in a rich locality which had already passed through the first stage of the mining camp, the leafy arbors, the brush huts and tents, to the building of shacks and

cabins. The new structures straggled along the road from Sacramento in a thin line at the edge of the cañon with the inevitable store for their center, or clung to the steep sides of the gulch. The shelter found or built by the boys from Woodburn was a tiny affair, but the wagon and the tent gave extra storage space and the easier living conditions were reflected in a lessening of the nervous tension. Quarrels receded into the background and were forgotten.

Here, or at the store on rainy evenings, they heard the details of that first mob trial at Hangtown. Five men, on a January night the winter before, had entered the room of the Mexican gambler, Lopez, to rob him, but were unable to prevent his giving an alarm, which brought the miners in with a rush. The whole gang were captured and held for trail. Men from Oregon took charge of the matter, a jury of twelve was selected and after a hearing the five were sentenced to a flogging of thirty-nine lashes apiece. The sentence was duly executed and the meeting was about to break up when new evidence was brought in that three of the men had committed a robbery on the Stanislaus River in the autumn of '48. Indignation rose to fever pitch and the cry was for hanging. One of the thieves pled for mercy but the miners would not listen. The three were hustled into a wagon and driven under a tree, the nooses were adjusted and the wagon was driven on. A few hours later the three were cut down and buried in their blankets.

Whether this summary action had a deterrent effect in warning away the light-fingered, or whether the preponderance of Americans noted by Henry Page was the cause, Bancroft remarks that the northern mines had much less trouble (than the southern district) with lawlessness and theft. The first emigration of 1849 was made up of men from small towns, villages and farms of the interior of the country or from the frontier settlements of the West, and they were honest as a rule, adaptable and self-reliant. The atmosphere of their mining camps was one of exuberance of spirits whether in work or play, and of frenzied haste to return home. Formality was lacking, rank was non-existent, and if the niceties of courtesy were

sometimes missing, whole-souled liberality could be counted upon. Later, changes were to come, changes reflected in Henry's changing estimate of his neighbors, but during that first year they merited as a class the unstinted praise he gave them.

In the cabin at Mud Springs on Christmas Day, Henry wrote a letter to John Gragg, paying off the debt of assistance rendered in the farm days. It contained detailed advice as to outfit and equipment essential for the trail, and rich locations in the mines. He was still without mail from home, for it was not until January 4, 1850, that he received the first letters after a silence of nine long months.

As Mary had said to herself as she wrote the first one, it was a large budget of news and not much of it cheerful. The cholera had invaded Woodburn and the neighborhood, and while none of the familiar circle had been touched, it had come distressingly near. Lucy Rider, the daughter of Matthew, that little brother whom Justus had left behind in western New York, had been visiting her Illinois cousins when the epidemic broke out. In a panic of fear she insisted on setting out at once for home without waiting for her brother, William M., who was to come for her, and the relatives learned that she died of the disease on the way. This was a blow, for the girl was a pretty winsome thing who had won a place in the hearts of them all.

The whole family had thrown themselves once more into the task of fighting this plague. Sarah, William, and James were nursing and again the older children were being taught to sit by the side of the sick and give water, or to carry from house to house the delicacies which Mary and Corinth and Teen were cooking for the convalescent. Elizabeth and Phoebe had their hands full with the little youngsters of all the families, but Justus was free for study of old records of former plagues and for experiments to determine if possible the source of the infection. He noticed, or thought he noticed, that meat spoiled faster that year and he placed some chunks atop of a long pole before his door, thirty or more feet above the ground, and found that they did not decompose with anything like the

same rapidity. The family discussed the phenomenon and wondered if there was a poisonous "miasma" near the ground.

The summer wore along and the contagion spent itself, but for the Riders a train of ills followed in its wake. Mary had a recurrence of her neuralgia brought on by the extra work entailed in nursing her two little ones through a siege of dysentery, then the dread enemy of childhood. Tintie and Willie both recovered, but William's baby, Theresa, the golden-headed child whom Henry remembered clapping and swaying while her mother played on the piano, was the next one stricken and after a few days' illness she died.

There was also an element of unhappiness in Mary's situation, small in comparison with the tragedies of illness and death, but galling to her pride. The Page cows which had been added to the Rider herd had failed to be as profitable as was expected, and Mary, supersensitive as she was, imagined the cost of maintaining her and the children was being felt by her brother William. The little money which had come in to her from the collection of a note given at the time of the sale she had used to purchase new household equipment from Sarah and Squire Meade who were selling out the farm and moving to Carlinville. She had, therefore, no funds with which to pay for her board, and she wondered if she had been too hasty in preparing for her husband's return.

Tinta had started her education and even that had led to an unexpected mishap. She had gone with Angie across the fields to the nearby district school and at the first recess the children had gathered in the yard to play games. Forfeits was the favorite and in the course of the game Angie incurred the penalty, being ordered by the tall ringleader to kiss a dirty freckle-faced boy whom she had never seen before. Angie, whose fastidious recoil was intensified by the teaching of Aunt Phoebe that a kiss was sacred, clapped her hand over her mouth and refused. The leader insisted and knotting a pebble in her handkerchief began beating the smaller child on the arm, while Tintie screamed in hysterical terror, until with the re-

peated blows the skin on Angie's arm was broken and blood began to stain her sleeve. Then the bully became frightened and let her go. When the two children reached the Rider farm, it would have been hard to tell which had been more upset by the experience. That would have ended the district school for the younger Rider children if there had not been a change of teachers. A new routine, said Elizabeth, might produce a change in the manners of the children, but Mary wondered whether she ought to let her little daughter run the risk of another such ordeal.

There was much to discuss and decide as well as much to tell when Henry answered his first mail from home:

N^o 10

CALIFORNIA, MUD SPRINGS, 44 MILES FROM
SACRAMENTO CITY, ON THE WEAVER ROAD,
6 JAN. 1850—

DEAR MARY

Day before yesterday, was to me, the happiest day, I have spent, since, I bid you a long farewell—I rec^d on that day, your letters, dated 21 July, 4 Aug & 8 Sept, and my pen would fail, if I attempted to describe the feelings of joy that filled my breast, as I perused the lines, penned by the hand of dear wife of my bosom. We knew that the cholera, had been very fatal at S^t Louis, but had no farther knowledge of its ravages—And with a thankful heart I learnt that you had all escaped, that desease, though much sadden by the news, that little Theresa was no more, and that sickness had prevailed to such an extent, among the dear friends, and espicially that my dear wife, was so greviously afflicted— You see I have commenced for a long letter, and I intend to take your letters as written, and answer them line for line—In the first place I wish you would number your letters, and by keeping a memorandum of the dates, you can state in each the date of the last 3 or 4 you may have wrote—and thus I will know how many have not been rec^d—This is my 10^th letter to you since I left Woodburn, you acknowledge the receipt of the first five —The 6^th was from Fort Hall & sent on in advance of the train to be mailed in California—The 7^th dated Bear Valley in Sept—The 8^th dated Sacramento City in Nov & the 9^th from this place on the 16^th Dec—In

fulfilment of a promise, I wrote to John Gragg on the 25th Dec & requested him to send you word of its receipt &c—Now after this list of dates I open your letter of 21" July, and again for the fifth or sixth time, peruse the same—You need not be troubled about our health on account of the sickness, that is "reported" as you say, to prevail in the mines, especially in the summer months—The locality of the mines, does not seem to be understood by the people of the States—We find no gold except high up on the streams, and in the mountains—All the diggins ever discovered, since the first at Sutter's Mill, have been in the mountains, and the past year they worked nearer the summit of the Sierra Navada, than ever before—and most of the rich places, of the summer diggins are found on the small streams of the mountain range flowing through deep valleys, or as called here *canôns*—You will see that, in that high altitude, and so near the high & snow capped mountains, that with common prudence all might enjoy as good health in such places, as in any section of the world—The *dry* diggins or *winter* diggins are lower down in the valleys, and on the small branches, that put into the large streams, and which are *dry* except during the rainy season, and consequently not to be worked in the summer, or *dry* season, on account of the lack of water—The river, or bar, or summer diggins, cannot be worked during the *rainy* season, on account of the superabundance of water—This winter we are situated only sixteen miles from the plain of the great valley of the Sacramento & American Rivers, among the high hills, that are covered with oaks, pines, & various kinds of evergreen bushes, called Chapperel—The hills here, have generally a gradual slope, and the small branches are mostly; easily accessible—But when on Bear River, we were in a range of country entirely different—higher up among the mountains, some 50 miles from the great valley, and among hills that, were truly mountains of themselves—It was a good hour's, hard work to climb from the River to the top of the ridges—On such streams & among such mountains do the miners spend the summer months, and all must say that as a general thing, health must prevail, for it is only unhealthy on the large valleys, inland from the sea coast—The rest of California may be considered healthier than any part of Ill[a], and considering the large numbers here and the little care, taken by many of their health, comparatively few deaths occur—We have not decided upon any place for our

summer opperations, and as we must necessarily work high up, among the mountains, I do not think you will now apprehend any cause for sickness, with us, who take so much pains, as to our diet & cleanliness as we do—For instance, in laying in our winters supply of provisions, we paid 25$ for sugar & 60$ for Beans, Pickles, Rice, Molasses &c in a bill of 300$ the outlay made—One of the diseases miners are afflicted with is the *Scurvy,* caused no doubt, by their mode of living, and using for food only Pork & Bread & Coffee—Variety must be had, and as preservatives for our health, a variety I intend to have, *not* to tempt an appetite, already sufficiently voracious, but only as a preventative of such diseases as the scurvy, dysentery &c &c—And as the fruits of our precaution, it is a common remark, among the hundreds who surround us, that they do not often see *four* so healthy, rugged looking men, as we are—We work hard, but never in the rain, have good food, a dry cabin, and a contented disposition; such is our fare, such our situation for this rainy season—We can work probably two thirds or three fourths of the time and have just commenced a work on the branch close to our cabin, that paid us 50$ each for our first three days work—and growing better & better—We are working on a bend of the creek, all dry work, and have uncovered a good space, & are now ready to keep a washer going almost every day that we can labor—After we are done working in the bank, we intend to let the water through the bend, & then tear up the bed of the creek, always considered, espicially in small creeks, the best diggins ———Perhaps in truth, you might have apprehended that some difficulty might arise, with the Americans & foreigners at the time you wrote —for then they outnumbered the Am.—but such is not the case at present—they have been drove from they country, as having no rights on the soil belonging to Uncle Sam, and the 60.000 or 70.000 emigrants of this past season have the whole range to themselves—This is true of these northern diggins, all of which are on the affluents of the Sacramento River, and in a great measure true of the southern diggins, all of which are on the affluents of the San Joaquin—By a reference to the map you will easily understand that this is a natural division of the mines, for San Francisco is the great natural & business centre of California, with these two great Rivers pouring their waters into her bay, one from the extreme north the other from the south & both swelled with numerous waters, all

of which flow from the great range of the Sierra Navada—The Mexicans, Chillians, Sandwich Islanders and Indians have *vamosed* from these northern diggins, and we are living among a community of miners, that will compare with the best farmers & laboring part of any country in the world—No one encroaches on our diggins, no fear is entertained that any one will molest our cabin—You may hear different stories than this, but they are not applicable to the mining community, but when one enters a city, he finds the loafer & gambler, and all the finished rascals, that the world can produce—They are too lazy to work, and get their living by certainly not honest means, & rarely show their faces among the hard fisted miners—If anything should arise to produce trouble, be assured that, although we are without laws, or any civil goverment, that the miners as a class, will always be found doing the right thing, and are all firmly bound together, by the simple laws of mutual protection, so that no wrong is permitted, but punishment is sure to follow—We are safer than if, we had a posse of Sheriffs, for now, every one has a great interest at stake, that can be only protected by this *tacit,* and simple bond, mutual protection—So that when we meet a miner we hail him as a brother, one who will at the first call rush to our assistance, if defrauded or injured—In short a man, must necessarily be honest if he stays among the class of men, we have ever met with—This somewhat prolix, but true statement of my situation while in the mines, will I trust allay all fears of personal violence & that your dear husband is not, any more exposed to danger, than if he was safely ensconsed in Woodburn ——————Your supposition is certainly correct, when you think that I can easily imagine the sadness of your hearts, for truly my former letters bear witness that our feelings have been alike, and that although compelled by stern necessity to absent myself from my dear family, for mang long & weary months, yet a great & prevailing sympathy now occupies by breast, to such an extent that my heart aches fearfully, as I glance at the lines that inform me that my dear friends have been so much afflicted by the loss, of that little one Theresa, and the great sickness of the whole family—And not only dear Mary has this been a cause of great sorrow to me, but how much aggravated, you, alone can imagine, when I learn that my dear wife has been so greviously afflicted with her old complaint, the sick head ache, and added to this, that terrible

disease the Neuralogy—And when thus afflicted to feel that she needs the sympathy, which she would be sure to have from her husband, if he was present with her— . . . I shall write you as often as we can send letters, but you will not, I hope, be disappointed, if every steamer does not bring you a letter—but if possible, will send every two weeks, knowing that you will do the same—for you must remember that I am now 44 miles from a Post Office, and as near as we will ever be located whil in the mines—We can send only occasionally by such men, as we can c[onf]ide in, for we do not seen them of[ten] again, and all mostly strangers to us—And I do not like to send a letter, & not be sure, that it gets into the Post Office, but when there, you know, better than I do, what speed they make on their way to Ill[s]—I hope none of mine will misscarry, but am not so sanguine about all of yours, but keep on writing & I will do the same—Your last letter rec[d] [8 Sept] was four months, before I rec[d] & even to get it then, with the other two rec[d], we sent by a man to San Francisco & paid him one dollar & the postage 40¢ on each letter & glad to get them at that rates—We ought to have had letters, sent by the middle or last of Oct—I have formerly said, & will here repeat it, direct in all cases to Sacramento City,—My last letter I sent by express & paid the postage to the states—which I hope will have speedy passage — — — You may read just as much of every letter, to the family, as you see fit, but always read over first yourself & mark those passages, you for any cause wish kept from others—Knowing you descretion on this point I shall continue to write for your eyes alone, trusting you will never have cause to blush at any I may write—for I shall "write just as I feel". — — Now I turn to your letter of 8[th] Aug—What you write about Willie's wanting playthings, makes me feel that I am anxious to hasten my return & when added to the hint you give, about somethings not so pleasant, in so large a family, I am the more anxious still to return, but prudence & sober thoughts, say Pagey hold on a little longer, & to Wifey bear a little longer if possible—and if not possible then get another boarding place—But you said so little, that I am in a quandary about this matter—I have an inkling of the same kind from Hank about this wife, who he says is boarding with Sarah — — — Dear Willie has good cause to say "what a good mama" for a better; child was never blessed with—I am glad to hear so good an account of

Tinta & hope she will improve fast—Keep her at school, if you have good ones, or teach her at home, just as you see fit—As soon as you have the means, from any scource I hope you will not try to wash any more, but put the washing out, for your health is the first & only consideration that ought to be thought of, for the benefit of your husband & children, as well as on your own account———I too dear Mary have often imagined myself, back with my dear family, at the old house, and can in some measure realise your feelings, when you visited the homestead & had your imagination so vividly impressed with the idea that I was *only* gone to S^{t} Louis—And then to have that little prattler say, "papa & me work in the field & mama cook dinner", O! my heart jumped & the tear filled my eyes—these feelings are, if I may so express them, some of the *sweet sorrows* that frequently come across me—And you who, are thus at times lingering around the old home, must have feelings, to great for utterance—Here I would give all the symathy I have, and still say—Keep good courage—all will come right——Dont be afraid dear Mary, that I shall take any thing amiss, that you may write, and your cautions & advice about resisting temptation, are rec^{d} with as kind a spirit, as I know they were penned, & are treasured up in my breast, as another incentive to do that which is right & avoid that which is wrong———You were wrong when you thought I would be "thinking, I wish wifey would not always be sick when she writes to me", no, pity for your extreme suffering was predominant & though I join heartly in the wish that you was not sick so much, it is not for the selfish purpose of having you well, only when you write me, but so that you might be well all the time——Thus in my poor way, have I glanced at your letters & now for a little of the general news—We are all four together comfortable situated in a log cabin, with a good chimney at one end, & two double berths at the other—We have a small cabin only 8 by 13 on the inside, but we use our wagon and a tent for storing our things—all as snug as a mitten—All things go on smothly in the mess & all are well—Nothing has occured to mar our peace since my last letter & all being guarded on that point, I trust nothing will occur—What our success may be, this winter, time only will tell, but of one thing be assured, that from our former experience, we all judge that our success this winter will be good—You shall know from time to time how the business pros-

pers—by the time set for my return, I shall have enough to take me home & some to spare, so if my health is spared, I do not think you will have to send money to bring us home—I have not heard from D^r^ Knapp since he arrived in Sacramento, only that he has gone South—I have not seen any of the friends you mention as having gone from the East—You ask how I spend my sabbaths—this is the Sabbath & the rest are spent in the Cabin doing a good deal, as I should at home, when I have no church to attend—Preaching I have not heard, nor expect to hear while in the mines—Remember me kindly to D^r^ Grinsted, Mr Spaulding & all friends—The best love to all the family & the largest share for the dear children & the dear wife of my bosom

Your husband

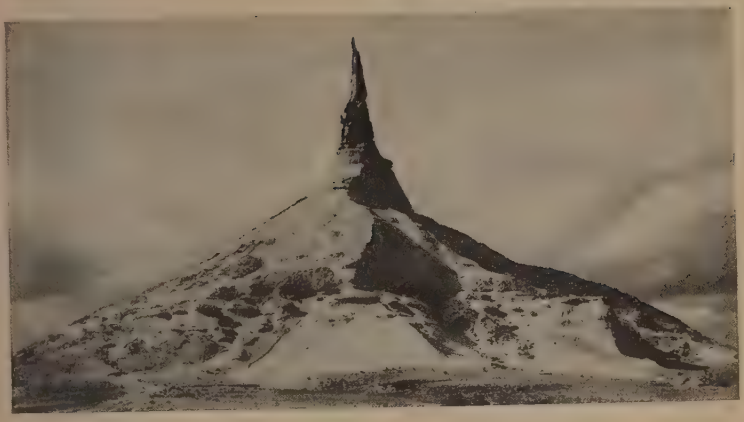
HENRY PAGE

Then, on re-reading her letters and his answer, he felt perhaps he had not been solicitous enough for her health, nor particular enough in his description of his own condition. She must have no cause for unhappiness. And the children must not be forgotten. If there had been laughter at Rider Hall over wasting postage on a child's unintelligible scrawl, Mary and Tinta and Willie must be reassured. The letters to the children were evidently carried about by the little people and finally lost, but the mark of Mary's scissors where she cut them off may still be seen:

9 Jan—Although putting to a severe test, your patience, by my unusual long letter, I feel that I cannot go to bed, without having a little more chat, with my dear wifey—Since the Sabbath, (the 6^th^) we have been able to work but one & a short half day, and my expectations of success, were more than realised, when upon weighing the gold, we found that we had each, another $50 to add to our purses—How long it will hold out thus favourable time only, will tell, but we are much encouraged —We are now having one of our rainy spells, and I have improved the leisure thus giving me, in writing to Mother & Bro W^m^ & D^r^ Grinsted —I requested the D^r^ to let you know he had received his letter—Perhaps he will let you read it———Since writing you on the 6^th^ I have felt as usual with me, when I write you, that I had not said half I wanted,

and the great solicitude I have for your health, adds much to this feeling at the present time—If I have failed to express great sympathy for you, & thus to show that my heart aches for the dear wife of my bosom, attribute it only to my poor ability in expressing, what I long so much to tell you—But I feel that Mary understands the heart of her husband, & will feel that grateful feeling she has so often expressed, for my attention & sympathy for her, when I have been with you—I feel very desious to be with you, when I thus hear, in three letters dated in the space of 2½ months, that you are still having, what you so gently call, *feeble spells,* but which my imagination makes much worse—Yes, I feel that I must drop all, & fly to you, to endeavour by my attention, which you so highly value, to alleviate the distress of that wife, dearer to me, than all others—But gaunt poverty, with his skeleton arm, waves me back, and the conviction rushes upon me, that I must bide my time——But I have the hope that ere writing this, you are much better, for months have gone, & I cannot feel, but that you will eventually regain your health—God grant that such may be the case—And that we may yet pass many happy years together is my prayer——Suppose dear Mary that you give me a full account of your feelings about all things, on which I have wrotten, when you next write—Can you not begin long enough before the time to mail your letters, to pour out everything into my ear ———State particularly about your health and all your affairs—You cannot imagine the good it will do me & no doubt by thus relieving your own mind, make it better for you—Cornelia & Henrietta both made mention of your sickness & I was fearful wifey did not tell how bad she had been—

If you do not consider that too long a time will have elapsed on the receipt of this since the death of little Theresa (which you must judge) I wish you to let W^m^ & Corinth know, that I feel deeply for them, and can well imagine their feelings, caused by the bitter draught they had to drink—Knowing the feelings I had when Willie was so low, I can sympathise with them—And well do I remember their great & kind attention & solicitude at that time—They with all our dear family showed the kindest attention to poor Willie & have the lasting gratitude of our hearts———In my imagination I can see you all cosily seated in the parlor at W^m^ each one endeavoring to keep warm,—while with us, cold



CHIMNEY ROCK

DONNER LAKE WAS BUT SIX MILES FROM THE SUMMIT

THIS IS THE SPOT WHERE THE DONNER PARTY PERISHED IN FORTY-SIX

DONNER LAKE FROM THE EAST

is not thought of—The weather is warm & pleasant like your spring, and the coldest nights, are those only of a severe white frost—I made the remark to Hank the other day without thinking that it was the dead of winter, that this was fine cool weather for work—For that day, was cool enough to work & for my hot blood to keep cool, by taking off my coat—He laughed & said, why Page this is the middle of winter—And I replied & said it was foolish to talk of *cool* & comfortable time for work at this time of the year, when you at Woodburn, were shivering with cold—

Let your Father, Mother & Aunt know, that though I have not often mentioned their names, that, I still have for them the same affection as ever—I cannot forget the interest, they have always seemed to have about me & mine, & trust I am not forgotten—And Fras, bouncing Fras, shall have a kiss to pay for my long absence, when I return—Kiss the maid for me—And there is Jimmy with his long arm, shall have a good grasp of the hand—

The other boys have all gone to bed & still I set here, pen in hand, at this to me delightful hour to write you—for I know that you are rarely alone without thinking of your husband, expicially in the evening, that thoughtful time of the night, just before one is feeling that he must retire to his couch—And you might ask what kind of a bed does your Henry have to sleep on & what fare does he have—I sleep on a buffalo robe & comfortable, laid upon good *soft* pine split boards, and being thus accustomed to sleep, rest as soundly as ever on a good bed—Though perhaps I may turn a little oftener during the night, so as to give each side a fair chance to enjoy the *soft* boards underneath——Our fare, is truly good—and Hank can make as good pies, either baked or fried & as good doughnuts, either with or without sugar, as we want—and sometimes we fancy as good as any one has—But as the *memory* of such things pass quickly away, as well as the *things* themselves, perhaps I am not competent to judge between those made after the old fashioned way & those made in our cabin—As for the bread, even Tom, though he has not so often tried, & Hank & Pagey makes that which disappears, very fast, either with or without shortning—But we make better bread than we saw on the road, or in the mines———There is one cabin within stones throw of us, & four others in sight—all occupied with four & six men—

I suppose there are over 100 miners within one mile of our cabin & 250 within two miles—I have seen but two women, in all this circuit of 2 miles though there is probably more—One was getting a bucket of water & the other hanging out her washing—This country is no place for women, though every where well treated & respected, they have to many inconveniences & to much hard work—I am glad my wife & children are in Illinois, though ever so much wanting their society, would always go to them, before they should come here——I shall go tomorrow & see a man, who I hear is shortly going to the city, and if he goes soon, I shall send my letters by him—Tom has wrote to his wife, but Hank has not yet written—I suppose he will——I have heard since the 6th that the man who obtained our letters at the Bay, sent our list of names back to the Post Office, requesting them to send up the letters that arrived in the steamer that arrived, the day he left, about the 1st—So that in two or three weeks I shall hope to have more letters from you—And I will write every chance I have to send down, so that wifey shall have as many letters if not more than the other *wives*—I have already wrote more than they have & dont you let them beat you—You can't write too *long* letters—nor too often—

Below you will find the letters for the children, which cut off & fold & give them & tell them I send a kiss for them both—The darlings I wish I could see them—

My light is burning low & I must to bed, for we rise early; so a sweet kiss for dear wifey & a kind good night & with the charge to keep good courage, I am, as ever

Your dear husband

PAGEY

I find I have greased this sheet, but still send it, supposing you rather have it thus, than not at all—I cut this sheet short, so that it may not overrun, the half ounce, as I have weighed them—You need not be afraid of sending two whole letter sheets, of the kind you write on, in one envelope—Goodbye—

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN Co
ILLINOIS
U. S.

(postage 40¢)

CHAPTER X

Gold Goes Home

EARLY in January, word began to come to Mud Springs of the flood in Sacramento. The rain, beginning a month early and continuing steadily, had raised the level in both the American and the Sacramento Rivers so high that by Christmas the flats on which the city stood had begun to be invaded and people were going about the lower streets in boats. Two weeks later, strange details were added. Four-fifths of the town was under water and boat-hire had risen to the astounding price of $30.00 an hour. The City Hotel, built on the frame intended by Sutter for a flour mill and standing on Front Street by the river, was receiving guests from boats at its second story window. Steamers from San Francisco, were coming up the city streets, since wharf and tie-posts were alike deep under water. People kept hoping that the high mark had been reached until too late to escape, and women and children were drowned. The City Hospital had been abandoned by its attendants, who left the sick to be rescued by the citizens, and, though all were removed in safety, only two survived the exposure. The rougher classes of men had grown reckless, and drinking and carousing added an element of sickening confusion. But, in the midst of the disheartening calamity, Sacramento was considering the future, and almost before the waters had started to subside, plans were on foot for the construction of a levee. The barricade was to be nine feet high, was to reach from the American River past the town, and work was to begin at once. The miners listened with a mingled sympathy and admiration.

But, if things were going badly in Sacramento, the four partners from Woodburn at least were faring well, and Henry was able

in his next letter to send his first payment home. A debt to his merchant brother, William T. Page of Rutland, was the first obligation to be met, and the remainder was to be sent to Mary for herself and the children. To Mary he wrote that, if anything was left after their needs had been supplied, there were three debts in Woodburn to be considered, the balance of the wages due young George Dodge, the youthful farmhand, to be paid in on his school bill, a payment on the pledge for the minister's support, and the remnant of a doctor's bill.

The high spirits caused by the success which was crowning their effort was reflected in the easier relations of the partners. Nicknames reappear and not even a toothache can effectually dampen Henry's joy, particularly when Doctor Budden, friend and neighbor from Bunker Hill, was near at hand to bring relief.

N° 11 MUD SPRINGS 27 JANUARY 1850—

DEAREST WIFE

I wrote you a long letter from this place (N° 10) on the 6 & 9 inst and was in hopes, that it would have gone by the steamer of the middle of the month; but was disappointed in sending down to the City, so that it will not leave till about this time—On 16 Dec I wrote N° 9 from this place & N° 8 in Nov from Sacramento City — — — I have had such good success in digging Gold that, I improve the chance of sending by M^r Charles W. Hoit of Lowell Mass, twenty two ounces of Gold dust—He lands at New York & will take it to the mint in Phila^a & send the proceeds to Bro. W^m T. to pay the Bonham debt—The 22 ounces is worth here at sixteen dollars per oz. $352, and I gave him one half the Gold brings at the mint over & above the $16 per oz, and direct him to send the amt. by check, to Bro W^m T.— . . . Buy a doll or books such as will please Tinta, or both if she is making good progress in learning & is a good girl, & something to suit Willie's fancy, the first you have the spare means, & if you please say that papa, wanted you to buy them for his dear children—Tell them I shall expect they will be good and obedient to their mama, and kind to all around them—I leave it for your judgement, whether to send them to school the coming summer, for you must be

governed in this by the school, and existing circumstances—Of course it is best for them to be in school, when possible, and if there is a good school in town or in your district, I hope you will be able to send them —I should by all means prefer the town school, & would not send them to your district school, unless the other children at school behave better than they formerly did—

You can see by what I have written above, that I have you & the children continually in my thoughts, and although I may have said many things unnecessary, yet it is said to my dear wife and will go to show her, that though far away, still I think much about my family & their welfare—And hope you will always give me, all the particulars about yourself & the dear children, for be assured that there is nothing that concerns wifey & the children that does not interest me—Although the past week has been one of continuous rain & snow, and therefore hindered us from our work, yet our success since I last wrote has continued good—And as we have spent this season of storm, housed up, and with little or nothing to do, you may truly think, that my thoughts have been homewards, and building castles in the air, about the future—

Sunday Morn. This is Sunday the 27th—for I made a mistake in dating the foregoing wrote yesterday—And it is one of those delightful, beautiful mornings, that so often follow a season of storm—For the past six days, storm after storm has raged around us, but now the storms are gone and all is fair & beautiful—And it seems more like a Sabbath morn to me, than most of the Sabbaths I have spent since I commenced my wanderings—Our nearest neighbour is a man of some fifty years of age, & formerly a Methodist exhorter or preacher in Missouri, and I now hear his strong voice, pouring forth *music,* after the *fashion* of Father Redmon—Although not very melodious, yet it brings to my mind, the many times we have all met, to mingle our songs & hymns together—And I fancy that circle of songsters still meet in W^{m} house, and while they sing, look around for the absent ones—We are there often in spirit, if not in our persons, for Hank & self often speak of the *sings we* have *all* had, & of those *you* are *all* now having—And though destitute of all Music Books, yet we sometimes unite in some of those good tunes, we have retained on our memory—And sometimes Judge will break forth in "Old Ned", "Dearest May" or "Ole Virginia" or something of that kind, and we

make the cabin ring—Hank or Tom will take the violin and often we keep it up for an hour—One might think, if they had not too good an ear, that we were a band of Amaeture Congo Singers—But as we are rather sparing of our efforts except when some poor, wretched Indian visit our Lodge, or perchance some Puke hailing from Missouri, we can safely defy all scrutiny———Though sadly deficient in reading, yet by running around, we pick up some few books, novels and papers, which serve to pass off, many a weary hour—I said in my last I had just then rec[d] your letters of Aug, Sep, & July, but I have seen New York papers, as late as the middle of Nov—Newspapers are printed in New York espicially for California & Oregon & sent by every steamer—And hundreds & thousands of them are sold throughout the mines by persons who make it a business to go to the Bay after letters & papers—We have the N. Y. Tribune of 13 Nov & in two or three weeks will have the chance of buying that of the middle of Dec, at the *low* price of One Dollar—Books & Papers meet with a ready sale, and Papers are cheap[er] & newer when bought of these ped[dler]s than if we had them addressed to us by mail from the States, for we have to pay more than one dollar for every letter or paper we get from the Post Office—The miners have more leisure & are longer in one place during the winter, and consequently are more eager for reading of any kind, than when wandering from place to place, & rarely prevented from work by the weather, as is the case during the dry season—

During the past month on the rainy days, we have seen more of our neighbours, than before, and my opinion has not changed concerning them, as expressed in my last *viz* that they will compare with those of any section in the states—But though acquaintances are formed, yet there is a different feeling prevailing, than in most society with you—Though there is a free openhearted way with all, yet there is not the same feeling of interest in one another, as exists in society with you—Here all know & feel that our acquaintance is of short duration, and almost all expecting some day to return to the states, do not naturally feel desirous to become an intimate with those, from whom, they are to be soon separated—It is something like [our] Stage Coach or Steamboat acquaintance, each one endeavoring, to make it pleasant for those around him, yet not thinking much about them, after they separate—I suppose

nine out of ten of the miners are calculating some day to return to the States, and their stay will be prolonged or shortened by their success, or the demands of duty & love for those left behind them—Some will stay for years, adding gold to gold & their avaricious souls, will hardly be satisfied—Some will be content with a sma[ll]er amount & hasten home to enjoy the [p]leasures awaiting them, in the society of those they love—Some, without a care or thought gamble & loose their gold, as fast as they obtain it—Thus you will hear different reports about the success of the miners, and all probably true as it regards those by whom they are given—But as a class the miners, are making money & much faster than, if at home—If my health is spared, I feel confident that I shall be well paid for my labors the coming summer, & fall,—But trusting in Providence, I go forward with a light heart, looking forward to the time of my return to my dear family & friends as one of the brightest & happiest periods of my life—This strong, confident hope that all will end well, adds additional strength to my arms, gives pea[c]e to my heart, & I plod along through these weary months of *our* separati(on) (dear Molly,) with that strong re[solu]tion and courage which so often enables man to overcome almost all difficulties, that interpose between him & the end he has in view—Being able so soon to send the Gold to W^{m} T. gives me a light heart, as I set all alone in the cabin, *talking* (as I *fancy*) to my dearest Mary, & telling her of my hopes—Yes the burden of one, & that the largest debt, is off my mind, & what remains of the S^{t} Louis debts appear like cobwebs, that will be soon swept away—Only think, half of my debts are paid, and my hopes of better days, is bright before my eyes, and that feeling of freedom, which has been so long bound down with this incubus, begins to struggle to break its chains, and ere long will escape from those hateful bonds, to roam abroad untrammelled and unfettered—And as gladly as the bird released from her cage, will I hasten away, never I hope, to return to this bondage again—

During the past week snow has fallen here to the depth of twelve inches, which is very unusual, and the Indians say the Americano's brought it—But it is all now gone, & it is as pleasant as spring—Six miles west of us it did not snow any, but five miles east, the snow fell more than two feet—This shows our elevation, & while hardly a flake of snow falls throughout the whole winter on the valleys, the moun-

tains are covered for Eight months—This is what Fremont so truly calls the summer side of the mountains—We are in the same latitude as S[t] Louis, but with the climate of Italy—

The growling of a tooth, which I am just now endavouring to allay, with a pipe of tobacco, puts me in mind of D[r] Budden, who did the good service of pulling an *eye* tooth for me, when at Sacramento City—The D[r] & George (his son) are staying at S. City this winter,—The D[r] intending to employ himself professionally & George having a situation in a store—In the spring I believe he intends going again into the mines—He has had pretty good success since he came in & they were both well when we left the City——The tooth had troubled me some before I left Bear River, & after having one D[r] try in vain to pull it, I met D[r] Budden, and he soon had his instruments in my mouth, and extracted without much trouble—

E. C. March connected with Castor Oil factories at Bunkerhill & Edwardsville, is in this country & is interested in a store at S. City, and when we came up here, we left part of our clothing in Judges trunk at his store, but hardly expect to get them again—For S. City has been overflowed with water, & the rise was so sudden that I suppose our things are ruined—I left my best coat (no great loss, small as it is) pants & shirts, but have with me all that it is necessary for my comfort at present, and as a large lot of clothing are an incumbrance to one in the mines, if lost, they may prehaps be considered as no loss, while I remain here—and would be only of use when I might leave for the States—As it regards all articles, except those for immediate use, the miner can well say, blessed be nothing, for they are only an incumbrance to him—And if he succeeds in keeping his purse filled with Gold, he need care only for two or three blankets and a change of underclothes —The blankets are indispensable, for wherever one obtains lodging in City or country, he has to sleep in his own blankets, and we rarely see one moving away from his own camp, without his blankets strapped on his back—The country has filled up, so suddenly, and as every miner is compelled to have blankets, when in the mines, they are not furnished, nor even beds, except at some of the large hotels at the Bay & by only one hotel at S. City when we were there—

Another sheet is almost filled for my dear wife, and even if necessary,

I have hardly room left to tell her how dear she is to me—I feel that our hearts are one & entirely devoted to each other—And what more can I ask, than to recieve frequent letters from you, wherein you will truly put down all your feelings, & some little of the love you have for your absent husband———In two or three weeks, I expect to get more letters from you, for I have sent again to the Bay—Perhaps after that yours will be all directed to S. City as I have so often requested—I made that request first in my Sept (N° 7) letter & in a month or six weeks, I hope to receive an answer—Write regular, and I'll do so if I can send to the office—Dont wait for my letters, but keep on writing—My best love to Sarah, Esquire, Cornelia, Corinth, W^m, Ja^s, *Fras,* Mother, Father, & Aunt—And with the largest share for my dear Tinta & Willie & beloved Mary, I remain as ever your dearest

HENRY PAGE

I send this by the man who takes the gold, with directions to mail in New York.

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^O
ILLINOIS
U. S.
postmark: New York Apr 26 postage 40¢

There followed three weeks of fine weather which hinted that the rainy season was drawing to a close. All too soon the waters would begin to fall, and the partners would be no longer able to work their present holdings. In the evenings, when their work was over, Old Frank and his partner drifted in from the neighboring cabin. The winter's topics of conversation—Captain Sutter and his championship of the cause of Californian independence before the United States came in to break the grip of Mexico on these northern lands; the comparison of the Mission Indians with the Diggers of the mountains, degraded, naked, beyond the civilizing of the Spanish Padres, living in huts of poles or dugouts in the hillsides; the fan-

tastic tales of now historic discoveries—these gave way to practical plans for the coming season, and the best methods of mining gold.

By the middle of February, it was decided that Hank and Tom should go scouting for a summer location while Henry and Judge maintained the requisite labor to hold their present claim. A large supply of bread was baked for the two prospectors who took rifles and ammunition to supply the rest of their needs and salt to savor what they might kill. Then, one morning, blankets were rolled into a pack and adjusted on their backs, pick and shovel were strapped fast and the two were off, their miners' pans and drinking cups jingling with every step. They would search for the courses of dry streams, watching for the rounded gravel hills that were sometimes rich in gold, or they would follow up the running creeks already being worked to look for some undisturbed bar. Every crevice in the exposed rocks would be minutely examined, each quartz vein would come in for careful scrutiny. In the end, they would return to the cabin at Mud Springs, elated or despondent as their findings might warrant, but no ill-luck could damp their ardor long, for optimism was in the very air they breathed.

In gay mood Henry could write his wife:

MUDD SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 17 FEB 1850

DEAR WIFE

My three last letters to you, were wrote from this place and dated as follows, N° 9 Dec 16, N° 10 Jan 6 & 9 and N° 11 Jan 27—The last was sent by Mr Cha^{s} W. Hoit of Lowell Mass, who would mail at New York —I also sent by him (22) twenty two ounces of Gold worth at $16 the oz $352, with directions to exchange the same at the U. S. Mint in Phil^{a} & send Bro W^{m} T. Page the proceeds, by check—I also wrote to Bro W^{m} T. informing him of the same, & requesting him as soon as he rec^{d} the check to forward you the balance left, after paying the Bonham debt —Hoit was to have one half the gold was worth over $16 per oz, to pay for his trouble, & I have no doubt the gold is worth $20 or more at the mint—If this is the case, it will amount to about $400, and I do not think that the Bonham debt can be over $300 & likely less, so that you will I

hope have a small sum at your disposal—Write immediately on receipt of the money from W^m T. and inform me of the amt. paid on the note & the amt. you also receive—I am much in hopes the money will arrive, in time to give you & the children spring & summer outfit and with what came from Rent of the Farm & other sources, give you enough for your use—At any rate I hope you will be explicit on this subject, and let me know all your wants, as early as you can, for it takes some five or six months to get an answer to letters———About ten days since Hank & Van Dorn rec^d letters from their wives, but the messenger, failed to get any for me, but I am confident there are letters for me, in the Office, for if Wifey was able to write, I know, she would be regular—We also rec^d at the same time D^r Grinsted letter of Nov 5, in which he said all were well at Mr Riders—though he mentioned Tinta attack of lung fever—but that she was better—And Hanks last letter was of 27 Sept, and I concluded that you must have written, since the last I rec^d of yours was of the 8 Sept—Our messenger will be up again in about one week, and I hope will bring some letters for me, for by that time we ought to have all letters wrote by the middle of Dec, for Van Dorns last letter was dated Dec 2—And I dont believe my dear Mary would let three months from the middle of Sept, pass away without sending some token to her absent husband, espicially when I learn from other letters that you were well & had rec^d the letter wrote from Fort Hall—I was much rejoiced to hear that this last named letter, had come to hand, for I knew you would be very anxious to hear, & perhaps the more welcome, because it was somewhat unexpected—As you receive my letters from time to time I believe you will find that, I have been, punctual and if you consider the length of some of them, diligent in writing, and I feel conscious that you have not been remiss—I almost know, that you have & will continue to write regular and be assured that I shall improve every opportunity of sending a letter to you—I am not certain I shall be able to send this down till I shall be able to acknowledge the recipt of more of your letters, but write now to have it ready the first chance—

During the past three weeks we have worked all the time except one half day, and it begins to be the opinion of the weather wise, that most of the rains are over for this winter—Of course we expect showers for two or three months yet, but not any more of our long continued rains—

The favorable weather, has been energetically improved by us, and we have handled the pick & shovel with vigor, and been well paid for our labor—Up to last night (Sat.) we have worked here 27 days apiece & rec^{d} $19 per day for our pay, and still are able to keep on digging for some time longer—We work about ten hours each day, and have gone over considerable ground, much to the astonishment, of numerous loafers around us—For it is here, as every where else, some are to lazy to work & some have no luck—But although perhaps as little inclined to undergo the hard labor, put upon sinful man, as any one, yet I am not such a fool as to take this long trip, & be so long away from my dear family & friends, & leave behind all the comforts of civilized life & society, and then idle away my time—Every hour is industriously employed, in doing my best, to hasten the period of my return to that & those I feel most dear to me, on this earth—When that time, to me happy hour, will arrive, it is impossible for me now to say, but I suppose, I must deny myself this pleasure, till the time has passed away that I mentioned when I left you, which was eighteen months or more—Our experience teaches us that now is the time to do all we can, before the mines become any more crowded—And also I believe that the dry diggins are the best, and they can be worked only in this way, viz. when the waters runs down in, so called, dry ravines, say by June or July, then go into the best one can find, & commence, digging the dry bed of the stream, and carry out the dirt onto the banks, & keep at this work till the fall rains, when one can wash his dirt, and thus have employment for the wet season, without working in the water—For instance in the same ravine, on which we live, men commenced throwing out dirt on the 1st Sept, & have had work up to this time washing, & have made their two & three ounces, for every days work done—This course is likely, the one we shall pursue, the coming season, principally on account of the great profit attending the same, and also for the reason, that we shall loose less time, in this way, than in any other kind of diggins—From this, we shall be able to go onto diggins that will, give us steady employment for the summer, fall & after the rainy season, till we have done washing—Avoiding all the delays & expense consequent upon following any other course—If such should be our course this season, of course, I shall inform you

of the same, and if I have my health, and good success, I intend after washing out what I may throw up, to make tracks for the States—

Hank & Van Dorn have for three days the past week, been out, prospecting, as we call it, that is gold hunting—They went in company with two of our neighbours, one of whom, has been in the mines since their first discovery, & is well acquainted with all the country & mines, and they found a place that they think will suit us, and pay well—We shall soon make further explorations, and of course go where the most gold can be had—Our friend (the old miner) is called Frank, a Swiss-german—His children are at Highland, Madison C°—He has been very successful, & intends returning to the States next fall or winter—He talks German, French, English, Spanish & some Indian—And if we work near him the coming season, as we intend, his experience in mining will be of great advantage to us, & his knowledge of Spanish & Indian, will not come amiss—He knows the whole country about here, & is acquainted with many of the Indians—As the Indians trade their Gold off, for provisions, we shall be able to understand them—All the Indians around here are, what is [ca]lled Mission Indians and formerly lived at the Catholic Missions, till about 1826, when the Mexican Goverment confiscated the property of the Missions, when these Indians to escape from the persecutions & tyranny of the Mexican goverment, fled to the mountains—They have always been friendly to the American Settlers in California, and Capt. Sutter had made friends with them to such an extent, that he had them entirely under his control—And when the Mexican goverment ordered all foreigners to leave the country, Capt. Sutter and the Americans in California, bid them defiance—The Mexicans soon learnt that had not only to combat with the Americans, but that hundreds of Indian warriors were leagued with them—And many of these Indians were found fighting with the Americans during the late war with Mexico, and many of them did good service—Their treatment has been such by the Mexicans & Americans, that they are friendly to the latter & enemies to the former—These Indians are a poor and dergraded race, & until the Gold was discovered, were entirely without clothes of any kind—But now they all have all the clothing they want, & that is not much I assure you—A shirt or a pair of pants is all they wear—And Hank [when] out prospecting, met an Indian carrying his pants on his arm, and entirely

naked—He was going to a store, but as it was warm, did not like to be burthened with pants, till he came near the store———From what the boys found out about the place they visited when out prospecting & what Frank tells about it, for he was there last summer, it is thought that it will pay at least two oz per day, and although this is better than we have done, yet if we can find better will not go there—There is plenty of ground yet, that is rich in gold, that has not yet been touched, and more gold will be taken out of the mines, the coming season, than has yet be found—We have been in the country since last fall & in the mines all the time & are the b'hoys who are prepared by our knowledge of the business to do as well as any—And we are determined to make the coming season pay, if possible, for we are well aware of the immense emigration that is still coming in by sea, and expect to see a crowd roll in next fall, across the plains—But we who undertook this, so called, fool enterprise, before all in the States were fully satisfied of the truth of gold discoveries, are just smart enough to know, that we have the start in the race & are dertimed to keep it—I consider one year now, worth, twice that time, after two or three years have passed—And hope I shall be able to try a sea voyage before twelve months have rolled away—But very few, [of] those who came across the pla[i]ns, will return that way—For my part when I get ready to start, I shall take the quickest way of returning & that will be, by the Isthmus—

Mining is hard work, but my health being excellent, I get along with it quite comfortable, using the shovel with more ease than at first—I remember the tugging & sweating I had when digging the drain to our cellar & the well, but if you could see the pile of stones & roots & top-soil, which we have not washed, it being of course worthless, you would think we had not been idle—We throw all the worthless stuff we have to move back on to the ground already dug over, and to give us room & to keep it from rolling down in our way, lay up the large stones like a wall, throwing all else over this wall—Thus we have to move the refuse, but once, & it is out of the way, & does not cover ground that we wish to dig—We have thus made a pile, if put in proper shape, would be as large as Bro W^{m} H. Brick house—And have likely two or three, or more, weeks work yet to do in this place—After which we shall turn the creek—

We have heard that our baggage left at the City, was not injured by the water—And therefore I shall have the articles, I mentioned in my last, I was fearful was destroyed — — We hear that provisions are much cheaper than last fall, & that a great supply is coming in—

I will leave the few lines on the next page to be filled up some other me—And I cannot close without, once more telling you that you must take care of yourself, your health; for this world, would not be enjoyed by me, unless I had my dear Mary, by my side—My love, my heart, my 'l, *you* have—& still I am not poor, for *I* have your rich love & heart in eturn—May God bless you & the dear children is the prayer of

Your husband

HENRY PAGE

Love to all the family

Feb 25—Have not yet received any more letters from you—And have just learnt that I can send to the Post Office—All well & in good spirits —Weather pleasant—Good bye—

HENRY—

IRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^O
ILLINOIS
U. S. postage 40¢

Experience was to corroborate Henry's judgment as to the best method of mining, for Bancroft, years afterward remarked: "A few patient and prudent diggers remained at dry diggings to collect pay dirt in readiness for the next season and by all accounts they did wisely."

Possibly the same express rider who took Henry's missive to mail at Sacramento had the two letters from Mary in his pouch. In any case, they were in hand when a storm on February 27 made outdoor work impossible. The delicate cobwebby tracing was full of love and pleading for a quick return, full of fears for his safety in the rough company of miners, full of news from Rutland as well as from Woodburn, news not altogether happy, for sickness was still rife, and Tinta had again fallen victim.

MUDD SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
27 FEB 1850.

MY DEAR WIFEY

Since adding the short postscip to N° 12 dated 17 Feb. I rec[d] your letters of the 28 Sept & 26 Oct—And though that postscrip was writte day before yesterday, I improve a stormy day, to write in full, answer to your two last letters, though perhaps I may not have a chance of send ing to the Post Office, for a week or more—But as I do not expect to f this sheet to-day, I shall write more, at some other time—And as there a various things to write about, and as I may not have leisure, after I lear of an opportunity to send to the Office, with pleasure I improve leisure day, to tell all my thoughts and feelings to my dear Mary—A to be more explicit perhaps I had better take your letters section b section, and thus perhaps be better understood by you, and therefore th more pleasing to me—For I can assure you, that next to the pleasure o reading again & again your letters, nothing gives me more pleasure during my long continued absence from my wife, than to set down, pe in hand, and hold a long chat with you—This is the time only, tha almost forget that we are so for separated, and when I fancy that yo are not far off—And when I recollect that your eyes will peruse thes lines, and that the account of my health & prosperity from time to time will cheer you, and make glad your heart, I feel that I am more tha paid for my long letters, by the pleasure I hope they give you—W (Hank and self) were disappointed in sending our last letters at the tim we wrote, but by have them ready were able to improve an unlooked fo chance, & at five minuites sent them off—

In my last letter I said that the best & most profitable way of workin the mines, was in what is called the dry diggins—That is after May o June when the water subsides and the ravines go dry, as do all t ch in the summer, to go into these ravines, or dry *canons* and throw o dirt from the bed of the dry stream, and continue so to do, till the f rains commence—I also stated in my last, that probably it would take h of the rainy season; to wash out the dirt—But I find upon consultati with our friends who are experienced in this branch of mining, tha over-estimated the time it would take to wash the dirt throw ou For as every thing is quite dry when the dirt is dug, and as we tear u

TURKEY CREEK

May 10. We have plenty of wood and water at this camp.

BEAUTYFUL LAKES

PANNING

the slate in bed of ravines, all the rock is clean & dry & the gold does not stick to them—Therefore with less labor are we able to separate to stones from the dirt, than when the ground is wet, and consequently we carry out less of the small stones, and the dirt when washed, is not only richer to the pan-ful, but also easier washed—And as I made up my opinion of the time it would take to wash the dirt, of the dry diggins from the labor required on the dirt dug & washed when the ground was wet I find I made quite a mistake in the time necessary to finish up the work I intend to lay out for next fall—If *all* the dirt in the ravine we may dig in, will pay to wash, of course we shall carry out all we can, and then it will take about *one* month to wash the dirt carried out in *three* months—But if we find that we have to throw of the top dirt, say six or eight or twelve inches, then of course we shall not have so much washing to do, & will probably be able in *one* month to wash out, that carried out in *four* months—So you see that I shall be through my fall operations much sooner than I expected, and although I am compelled to say I cannot give you any encouragement that I shall be able to return before next fall, I hope you will see the propriety of this course before you have done reading this letter—And still I do not intend to "prolong my absence longer than *necessary*"—Though I have your earnest pleadings before my eye for my return this Spring, and my heart bleeds for you, and desiring anxiously to be with you to render what comfort I can to that dear wife who is greviously afflicted with sickness, made much harder to bear, on account of the absence of her true & devoted husband; who is almost distracted with these painful emotions, yet I *must* say, I cannot hope to see you before next fall, unless extraordinary & unexpected good luck, attend my labors—Yes dear Mary I feel that the die has been cast, thrown by my own hand, when impelled by dire necessity to bring myself to say farewell to you—And I feel that I must bide my time—We are still in debt, and when I return, I shall have to pay for your & the children's board, and buy furniture for housekeeping, and if we again go onto the farm, I shall have team & stock to purchase—All this you will know will take quite a sum of money, and my judgement tells me, that with a fair prospect of obtaining means necessary in this respect, it would be folly to leave all & return to Woodburn without a cent in my pocket—I do not think I am at all avaricious, yet *duty alone* com-

pels me to stay here a little longer—When I return I should like to have enough to pay off all debts of every kind and have enough besides to make things comfortable for my dear family, and then I shall feel paid for my labors & absence—Such would not be the case now—If I leave now, I leave behind the best prospect I ever had of making a raise, and return as poor or rather poorer than ever—We have broke up housekeeping and sold off every thing, and I have come safely through a long and arduous journey, have safely arrived in this far distant land, and now with good health, and some experience in mining I cannot look upon all this, and be content to loose all the advantages that, I am just prepared to gain—And you will believe me when I say, that I have the welfare of my wife & children, so much at heart, that I cannot thus ruthlessly cast aside what I trust will conduce in the end so much to their well being & happiness in this world—There is a great responsibility resting upon me, which I would not if I could, endeavor to escape; a responsibility, that gives courage to a wavering heart, & strength to the wearied arm, and which I am proud to say is one great mainspring of all my actions, and that is to do all I can to render happy, the dear wife of my choice, & the dear children God has seen fit, to give us—And when I view my worldly circumstances, and know, that those so dear to me, in the event of my death, would be left without a morsel of bread or a covering from the inclemency of the weather, that they could call their own, I feel a strong voice within me saying *persevere,* do your duty, & trust the event to God—And dont consider me cold hearted or wanting in love or sympathy, when I am thus able to curb, the great derise I have to be with you—Though chafing with the restraint thus laid upon us, is it not the part of wisdom, and that which in all human probability, will best give earthly comfort to both of us, as well as our children, is it not our duty, our solemn duty, to wait patiently the few months that may intervene before you can expect my return—Cannot my dear Mary, arise above every thing else, and say when she answers this, that her husband is in the right? And say God speed him in his self denial, & crown his endeavors with success—Though you are feeble & distracted with pain, cannot I hope to receive the answer that in all I have written about this, that you coincide with me?—But why these questions, I hear the small voice of your convinced judgement, saying my

husband is right, I will keep good courage, and hope that all will be well —Through all this long episode, I have constantly in mind that, you have suffered very much from sickness, and much debilitated by weakness— And great and strong feeling & sympathy has almost broke my heart— But with a submissive will I look up to God, leaving all in his wise hands —And look forward with strong hope & feelings of joy to the time when I shall be able to bid farewell to California, and hasten on the wings of love, to those so very dear to me—

I am truly sorry to hear that the dear friends have been so greviously afflicted with sickness, and feel much for them all—I hope in your next to hear that health is again enjoyed by all. And you yourself, sick & almost all the family sick around you, I do not wonder that you feel low spirited & sad, & that you were tempted to threaten never to write a cheeful letter to me—But in spite of yourself, you write that which, although tempered with sadness yet shows, that the courage & spirit of my wife does not entirely succumb, to these afflictions, but that she can when so determined hold up her head & bid care avaunt, implicitly trusting in the overruling providence of a merciful God—

I am glad to hear once more through you, from old Rutland, and that my dear Father is yet spared—It seems part of family are determined not to let the Page blood & race be extinguished, and much joy may they all have in their children—I trust you continue to write them from time to time, & dont forget to let me hear all that would interest me—

You will no doubt have recieved my two last letters before this comes to hand, announcing the forwarding of some money to W^{m} T.—If you, on the receipt of this have not heard from W^{m} T. about this, it would be best immediately to write him & let him know the particulars—I sent the money direct to him, so that he might receive it sooner & thus avoid the necessity of your going or sending to S^{t} Louis to sell the check & also not knowing the true amount of the Bonham debt—Of course when you receive the money from W^{m} T. you will pay all you have borrowed (cash) and do with the balance as you see fit—Run around all you wish, to Carrollton and to other places that you wish—I want you to enjoy yourself all you can—

That part of your letter filled with the local news was you may be assured quite welcome. And I hope to have a dish of the same served up,

a little oftener—And you must as I do, judge of the joy that is experienced when I am able to read a letter from you, by your own feelings on the reciept of mine—And faithful I have been, & faithful will I be in writing—

By this time, I think you will have found out, that you greatly overestimated the dangers, to which we were exposed on out journey—As well as those surrounding us in the mines—And although thus misled by your fears & the thousand foolish reports in the Papers about imaginary dangers, I hope you will be able, from what you have since learnt, to throw aside all these fears about our past or present danger, and that you will not borrow any trouble as to any thing for the future. If I come home by the Isthmus, as is my present intention, I dont think any more of that trip, than if crossing our northern lakes—

2nd *March*—We have another of our unpleasant & stormy days, and as I cannot work and having little else to do, I shall try to add a few lines for your perusal—We are shut out, as it were, from the world, and have little that is new to attract our attention—And when we get hold of a Paper it is read again & again, and every little incident forms the topic of conservation—Besides the occasional glimpses we thus get of civilized life through the Papers, and the common chit-chat of a neighbourhood of miners, we have but little to occupy our attention except the all absorbing talk, about gold—Its first formation; general diffusion over so large an extent of country; why one portion is so much richer in gold, than others; the different positions in which it is found, in some places among the drifting sands of the large streams,—in other places embedded in the slate rock — — or in the small ravines—or in the soil, ten or twelve feet under the surface—in short in almost every variety of position, and in evey form, and of all sizes from the smallest particle, up to pieces weighing fifteen to twenty pounds—The why & wherefores of all this, are common subjects of conversations, and which naturally interest all in the mines—But when I myself, have the extreme delight of opening & reading one of your letters, dear Mary, you may be assured, that all these common place things, give way before the all absorbing thoughts, that I permit to range, through my breast concerning "those I have left behind me"—And as this, to me is too holy a subject to be defiled or trifled with my consversation with any around; like a miser I hoard up

all these thoughts, in secret gloating over them—And the color of my treasure is never exposed, except to the eyes of my dear wife———When there is that true affection and appreciation, which ought to exist between husband & wife, there is a feeling which is ever present with me, that forbids, on unecessary or trivial occasions, the introduction of the name of a wife into common conversation—With scrupulous care, do I always avoid such conversations, feeling that I have a treasure, in the affections & fame of my wife, which none others know how to appreciate,—That affection I must preserve for my own sake, as well as the happiness of my wife, and that fame must in like manner be kept pure & unsullied—Therefore as it is not wisdom to throw "pearls before swine", I am fain to keep the name even of my wife free, from the possibility of all contamination—And when I hear one vaunting the name of his wife, I feel that, that man is deficient in the fine moral feelings, which ought to constitute his character, and is entrusted with a treasure he knows not how to value, or he would not inconsiderately ex[pose] it to the gaze of another one—It is only when the occasion calls for it, should one mention the possession of that most dear to him, but still always be ready to defend that treasure with his last drop of his blood . . .

The following evening came news of a chance to mail and although it was dark, Henry finished his letter by the smoky illumination of the failing fat-light, that miner's lamp, made by filling a bowl with sand soaked with bacon grease, and standing a wick in the center. When the grease had been freshly replenished the flame was fairly clear, but as the oil grew low in the sand the light became more and more questionable.

3 March. Sunday Evening—A neighbour has just called & said he goes to Sacramento tomorrow, and although you may perhaps recieve this by the same steamer, as my last, I cannot withstand the temptation it affords of sending this—Knowing that news from your husband, will always be recieved gladly—and besides I may not soon have an opportunity to send down—It is a long ways to send to a Post Office, and as this is [ta]ken to S. City free of expenses, and by a sure hand, it will go—Now, all your letters still come directed to San Francisco about 180 miles

from here, and we send for them by men, who follow the business of bringing up letters, for all who order, and Papers to sell—We pay them $1.00 for every Paper we buy of them, and $1.60 besides the 40¢ postage for every letter, and glad to get them, even at these enormous prices—And as these express men have to make a trip to the Bay say every month at a cost of not less than $100 each trip, they have to get many letters & sell many Papers to make it profitable—I shall expect soon to receive your letters directed to Sacramento City, when I shall not only be able to get them sonner, but cheaper—We now would have to pay only $1.^{00} besides the Postage from S. City—And as soon as the roads are better, I suppose it will be much cheaper ———The nature of the soil is such that the roads are almost impassable during the rainy season—There is no hard-pan or tenacious sub-soil, and the ground, during the summer becomes dry down so far, that in the rainy season, it is like travelling over a plouged field—And as the roads had not before this winter ever been travelled by teams during the rainy season they are worse than they probably will be another winter—For they are so worked up and *puddled* & settled that they are better now, than when we came up in Dec—Then with a team we could not make ten miles a day & frequently our waggon was in the mud up to the axeltrees—It is some 45 miles from this to S. City, and we were six days on the way, but lost some considerable time, by the straying of our cattle—It could be travelled now, much easier & quicker—

In reading over my letter I find more mistakes than usual, some of which I have rectified & some have not—If you are troubled to make out the meaning, I hope you are good at guessing—for our *fat* light is so bad, that I can hardly see—In fact I can hardly see the lines as I now write, and find that I have missed them & so will write the rest of this without any regard to them. Hank has not written, and I suppose he will not—he, as well as all of us enjoys good health—

We have tried the bed of the stream but do not find enough gold to pay—And are therefore still working in our old place, but are able to make only some $8^{00} per day, by hard work—And we are fain to be content with this, for the present, for the water is yet too high, to commence our work as we wish in our other ravine—We shall soon look up our cattle & when we leave here, go to the City & either sell them at once,

or after hauling up a load for ourselves—Love to all the family—And a large share for Tinta, Willie & my dear wife—

Your devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

5 March—I open this to say, that I missed the man who was to take this to the office, and also to say yours of 14 Dec. has just come to hand—Glad to get this late news from you—Will write in full an answer, at another time—All well good bye—will write in my next to the children

PAGEY

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}

Postage Marked 80¢

(written Mary's hand "I paid 40")

When Henry next took up his pen, about three weeks later, he headed his sheet with a phrase which showed how fast events had moved in this Californian country. When he first wrote from the winter location on December 16, "California" was the nearest to a description he felt called upon to give. By January 6, a long qualification seemed necessary: "California, Mud Springs, 44 miles from Sacramento City on the Weaver Road." A month later he wrote "Mud Springs, California," as address sufficient, but now he proudly inscribes: "Mud Springs, Eldorado County, California." It was a mark of the organization of the miners.

Paxton describes the process thus: "In 1849, President Taylor sent word that mining camps had better draw up a constitution for themselves and make immediate application for admission to the Union. . . . The immigrants themselves were more than ready. Beyond the limited amount that could be done by voluntary association in the mining districts, by self-help, and by an occasional vigilance committee formed by outraged citizens, the community had no accepted basis of law and order. Men went armed, and the nature of both their business and their play made altercation and combat

frequent. There was gold dust, quickly got and as quickly spent. There were grog shops, gamblers and dance halls without number to prey upon the miners. The men themselves were mostly young and carefree. There were few family ties to make for decency and self-restraint. Yet the community did not disintegrate into anarchy. From the first arrivals the average immigrant believed in law; and there was a steady development of orderly habits that culminated in a constitutional convention held at Monterey in September 1849."

The quality of the delegates chosen for this convention reflected the characteristics of this horde of miners. They came from seventeen states, from Spain, France, Scotland, and Switzerland. It had been easy to find a goodly number who had been trained in the law, and their discussions were by no means crude or laughable. The constitution of the state of Iowa was used as a starting point for the debate, and by December the new instrument of government had been ratified by the would-be state. Given and Fremont were elected the first senators and were sent to Washington to obtain the coveted admission, while among the miners the organization into counties went forward rapidly. By March, the stretch up the American River, where the first discovery was made, had become Eldorado County in full and regular standing.

Mining methods were keeping pace with the changing community. It was no longer customary for men to depend on the slow accomplishments of the miner's pan. This elementary implement was made of stiff tin or sheet-iron with a flat bottom, ten to fourteen inches across, and with flaring sides about six inches in height. This pan was partly filled with dirt and lowered into the running water to be swirled and oscillated till the lighter dirt was dislodged from the heavier gold and washed away, leaving the yellow dust. All prospectors still used the pan, but the miners on a claim were beginning to work with rockers or cradles. In its first and simplest form, this was a wooden box on rockers, resembling a baby's cradle. There was a hopper with a perforated bottom at one end, a canvas strip to guide water from the hopper to the opposite end of the cradle

and strips of riffle-bars of wood nailed across the floor. The dirt was put in the hopper, and the cradle was rocked with one hand while the other dipped water from the stream and poured it over the dirt. Stones were caught and held in the hopper, while the muddy water ran through, down the canvas to the cradle floor and down the cradle floor to escape by the open end. The rocking motion served to separate the gold, which was then caught on the canvas and against the riffle bars.

Some men varied this invention by making it stationary, and lengthening it sometimes to the extent of thirty feet; the hopper was enlarged to form a trough, but perforations were only made at the lower end over a five foot riffle-box. The dirt was shoveled into the upper end and men stationed along the sides stirred with their shovels, and scooped out the gravel when the stream of water began to play. This was a contrivance which required a partnership of several men. But the refinement of efficiency was the quick-silver machine owned by the plutocrats of Mud Springs, for which they had to pay at least three thousand dollars in Sacramento, and rumor had it that some traders charged twice that sum. Henry Page and his partners went over to look at the new machine. It was a long rocker with a perforated iron top which completely covered the usual riffle-box. Quick-silver was placed along each of its riffle-bars to retain the fine gold. The men who owned the thing explained that the gold was extracted from the mercury by wringing it through buckskin bags, and they added impressive figures to show how it had increased their daily output.

The four Woodburn boys were thoughtful as they walked back to the cabin. They had no three thousand dollars, but Hank had done many a more complicated piece of carpenter's work than that required in the construction of this machine. With the others to help him with the materials and the rough work, it might be fairly quickly done, and hopefully they commenced the task.

In a spare hour, Henry expended ink and effort in an orgy of the "rounded periods" that he affected to despise, in an attempt to con-

vince his Mollie that the rest of boarding, the freedom from the cares of housekeeping, were what she needed rather than her husband's presence:

MUD SPRINGS, ELDORADO COUNTY
CALIFORNIA 17 MAR 1850—

DEAREST MARY

Fearful that some of my letters to you, may misscarry, I cannot let another opportunity to send to the Post Office pass by, without sending a line to you—though my last N° 13 was dated Feb 27 & 7 Mar & N° 12 dated Feb 17 & 25, yet not knowing how to fill this sheet, in a way to interest you, I am persuaded to believe that it will give you pleasure, if it only contains the important fact, that I am still enjoying the best of health—Aside from this, if it seemed to while away a few moments in the perusal thereof, I shall feel that you will gladly peruse the lines traced by the hand of your absent husband, and look more to the motive which induces him to write such long & tiresome letters, rather then to view them with a "critics eye"—And if your heart jumps with joy as you break seal after seal, you know something of the pleasure, I enjoy when I receive your letters—And as I write, not for fame or the public eye, I feel as I set down that, I can with impunity write every thought, as they go hopping through my noddle, without any fear that they will be miss-interpetred or missused—And thus I write without much regard to connexion or sense, almost any thing that comes uppermost in my mind; for in writing to one who knows so well as you do dear wifey, all the ups & downs, & faults & failings & the little goodness & talent I possess, I feel that it would be a waste of paper, & time for me, to endeavor to frame well written sentences & form rounded periods—Thus you have me, not only as a husband, but as a correspondent; untutored & unskilled in the art of letter writing, & one who is so willful, as not to try to improve—So if you can, like the bee, find one drop of sweet, you will, I trust, pass by all the bitter & honeyless words, I so thickly strew these lines—

In a postcrip to my last, I mentioned the reciept of yours of 14 Dec, which makes six letters rec[d] from you, & I conclude from their contents all you had mailed up to that time—You have probably ere this, rec[d] a host of letters from me, and I hope to be able to keep on pouring

them in upon you, so that you will recieve at least one each month—Of course you will still continue to direct to Sacramento City, and in course of time they will find their way into my hands—But as it takes five or six months to get an answer to our letters, we must both continue to write regular—Three months ago, at the date of your last you were just starting for Carrolton and probably are, long ere this again back to Woodburn—Looking ahead to the end of the next three months, I fancy I can see you setting down to answer this, sometime during the month of June—Eight years will then have run their rapid course, since we were married,—years & days truly have they been, fraught with joy & sorrow —hope & disappointed expectations—Joy, in the pleasure we have had in one anothers society, in the socity of our dear friends, and children, and in all the great blessings which God has poured out upon us—mixed with sorrow for our own sins, and sorrow for the pain & sickness & death which has invaded the circle of our friends—Cheered with the hope of better things in this life & that to come, strengthened & buoyed up by this gift from heaven, we have still been able yet to *hope,* though disappointment, & sorrow, & care, & toil have been allotted to us—Blessed, blessed gift of God, that sure and steadfast anchor to the soul, *hope,*— Hoping for a better inheretance in another world—and trusting in Divine providence, hope gives elasticity to our minds & vigor to our arms —It is one of the bright cherubs always before us, to entice us, on, and leave behind the scowling visage of care & gloom—A bright star, always shining the more clear, through the darkness of disappointment, and if we will only lift our eyes, from the blind path of this life, a sure guide to peace & contentment here & hereafter—When we thus are able to look above & beyond the cares & disappointments & trials, which beset our path and which are grevious for the present—that hope, will soon bring a full knowledge; & thus joy & happiness will reign triumphant—If we have the faith thus to look forward, to the unknown realities of another world, ought we not also to believe the promises of that same God, who says all things shall work for the best, with those who are ever the objects of his care, in regard to our happiness here in this world—I have this strong faith, this strong expectation that my sojourn in California & our long separation; though perhaps distressing & unpleasant at present, is that which is best for us,—Not that I mean that my success in obtaining

a little gold, should be looked upon as the great end, but only as a means to be employed for the good of others & to add to our comfort in this world, and give us the means to obey the injunction "owe no man"; considering ourselves under all circumstances as the stewards of God—Prompted by such feelings am I constrained still to abide here, and see what this summer & fall will bring forth; knowing the necessity of using all proper methods to avoid the application to me, of that saying of the Apostle "that he who provides not, for his own household, is worse than a heathen"—This is a duty fully impressed upon my mind, and if I turn my back upon the expectations I now have, it would be considered not only folly, but as I view it, an attempt to avoid a duty & obligation imposed upon me—Dont think, dear Mary, that those other & solemn duties resting upon me, of protecting & solacing the partner of my bosom, & cherishing & guiding aright our dear children is forgotten or overlooked—Though absent from them for a season I think it so evident to you, that this course of mine is correct, that you will look upon this self denial we are called upon to undergo for the present, as that which as far as human view extends, will most likely end for the best. I have been thus, as it were, compelled to fortify my self, so as to guard against your urgent & strong solicitations for my immediate return—For if I had obeyed my own inclinations & feelings, I should be far, from prolonging my absence—You know the only motives that induced me, to tear myself from my dear family, and when that end is accomplished I shall hasten my return—You may say "hope defered maketh the heart sick", but remember that I did not expect to return in less than eighteen months & under ordinary circumstances that is as short a time as one could expect to make the trip & derive any benefit therefrom—Though I expected you to enjoy much better health than you have & have been much pained to hear of your afflictions, it is evident that rest is what you need, & as my frequent letters will cause all anxiety about me, to be quieted, I hope that I shall hear from time to time, that my dear wife is more resigned to my absence, & that her health is improving—The only way, I can see for you to have the rest you so much need, is while boarding, and we could not expect to board long, if I was not away—Especially when we consider our small means———It may be true that I "do not realise the extent of yours & the childrens affection for me"; if so, it is only because they

are all possessed with a greater share of love, than my cold heart is capable of—For in such matters we have nothing to measure the love of others by, aside from their actions, except by comparison with our own feelings —I am however confident of one thing, that you & the children love me more than I deserve, and "while remembering my kind acts" must forget many others, in which I failed to give pleasure—As I regard it, esteem must always go with love, and you have long commanded both —And has my course I often am tempted to ask myself, been such, that yours will not vanish away like a dream—But I will not pain you by putting an unfair question—for every question is unfair, what is answered in one's own heart—Yours will remain [f]irm for me—& mine for you, because we have seen and known each other under circumstances, which have called forth the feelings & displayed fully all the inmost thoughts, which years of ordinary intercourse have devloped—Our true confidence in each other admits of no doubt on this subject—Judge me not harshly, or consider me wanting in affection for you & the children, for it is no pleasure to me to be so far away from you—Situated as we are, away from all friends, & society, undergoing privations of various kinds, dont think that avarice is that which leads *me* on—The chains of this monster would not be sufficient, to keep me from the outstretched arms of my dear family— . . .

We are making a new machine, for washing gold, to use till we can commence opperations in the dry ravines—It is large & we shall use quicksilver with it—We have but a few days' work in our old place, & will endeavor to have the large machine ready as soon as we need it— It will take five or six men to keep the machine going with effect & the quicksilver so readily amalgamates with the gold, that we shall save all the fine gold—We have not decided where to set the machine in opperation, but will in some point near this place—If we find diggins to pay, (of which we have no doubt) we shall probably work this machine as long as the waters last & until we go into the dry ravines—

Sunday Morn—I was called off yesterday, & will add a few lines only this morn—In some of your former letters, you asked how I spent the Sabbath. We never go to hear preaching, or to a religious meeting of any kind, for they are not to be found—We never work, in our diggins, which is a general thing with the miners—that is no work on Sunday—

We read (if we have any thing to read) & I generally keep at home— As a general thing the Sabbath is passed in a very quiet & orderly manner by all—Some visiting—Some few perhaps washing or mending or walking about—Commonly I believe all do, just about as they would at home—

Lately we have had quite a treat with some potatoes we purchased— We bought twenty pounds at the rate of 45¢ per lb = $9.00 for just about a common water bucket full—Rather dear food you will say, but it is necessary to have a change & as we were getting out of Dried fruit, thought a few *Pratties* would go well—And they are a good thing as a preventive to the scurvy; to which we miners are all subject, if we live too much on salt food, without vegetables of some kind—Therefore on account of our health we are compelled to spend much for different kinds of food—Many around us, are or have been touched with the scurvy— It comes on with sore or tender gums, & pain in the legs—After a time the legs swell & the system is generally deranged—But as all this, can be avoided by proper diet, we think best so to do, than to pay the Doctor & lose so much time—

My best regards to all the friends, and a heartful of love for you & the dear children, I am as ever Your Devoted Husband

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN COUNTY
ILLINOIS

Postage 40¢

CHAPTER XI

Next-Door to Fortune

DR. GRINSTED, the jolly English physician of Woodburn, did a kindly act that winter. He took time from the busy round of a country doctor's life to write to the boys in California a long gossipy letter, beginning with the affairs and well-being of their respective families and extending to the very fringes of the neighborhood. No one was forgotten, from the old dog Rambler who worked the churn at the Riders, to Widow Sellers, the village washwoman who had shocked the community by producing a conventionally inexplicable baby. There was news of weddings accomplished, impending, or merely suspected to be about to impend. In this last class was a hint that Henry's little sister-in-law, Frances Rider, was interested in some doctor. Henry's mind leaped back to his friend from Bunker Hill, Ed Ellet, and he saw him as he used to be in his student days when he came into the store in the corner of the tavern, tall, handsome, full of dash and charm. What a pair those two would make, Fras and Doctor Ed. It never occurred to Henry that serious Doctor Webster, who was nearly twice her age, would be the young girl's choice.

The four partners laughed and dreamed over the letter which brought the home circle swiftly near over the dreary intervening miles. It gave a momentary relief and diversion to homesick, weary men, even though it was powerless to halt the intolerable increase of tension for more than a short time. For five months now these four men had lived in a room eight feet by thirteen, cooked, eaten, slept in the one place, in the intervals between hours of physical labor more exacting probably than any of them had ever known. Monotony of task, monotony and discomfort of surroundings had

combined to produce one of those crises of bored irritation characteristic of isolated men, often unreasonable, always abnormal. The resulting flare had altered the whole situation, and on April third, Henry, being left alone in the cabin, poured out his heart to Mary. He sat down, prepared to plunge at once into an account of the quarrel, but as he wrote the date "April——" a flood of memories arose. April, the Judas trees and the white shadbush leaning from the fence on the Woodburn road, a new Conestoga creaking on its way, high hopes at the start of a long journey. When he came to the matter of the rupture of the partnership, he was typically more anxious to allay any anxiety that might be felt at home than to bid for sympathy himself, though his hurt could be seen by eyes that loved him, in the reference to his other experience with pretended friendship at the time of the robbery of his store. If the explosion brought any good in its train, it was the reëstablishment of the cordial relations with Tom Van Dorn. "Van" evidently proved an ally with whom he could talk freely. They parted, therefore, on the old basis of friendship.

MUD SPRINGS, 3 APRIL 1850—

MY DEAR WIFE

One year has rolled away since I bid you adieu,—and months and days have they been, teeming with events that will have a great influence on our future life—As I look back & trace my course I have great cause to be thankful for the kind care of God, on me bestowed—In dangers seen & unseen, in all the varied situations of a year of roving, have I been preseved & blessed—I look back & shall never forget the feelings I experienced at our parting, and which as I took the ox whip in my hand, made me wish, I had not undertaken the journey—And as I rose the hill south of our house, I turned and viewed our own house and the thousands of thoughts that rushed upon me, fairly unmaned me—Dashing off the tears, I turned to take a farewell look of the house that would be your home, during my absence, and with a bursting heart, turned my back upon all that, which was & is so dear to me—I remember our trip to S^{t} Louis & the ague & fever I had; our first night in camp; the short stop in S^{t} Louis,

and there I almost felt lost in the crowd & confusion & hurry & excitement, surrounding me, as our boat ploughed its way through the muddy waters of the Missouri—Upon our arrival at S^t^ Jo found the whole country filled with men, all eager & striving to obtain some advantage in the great *race* for California—For the whole journey to this country was, a *race;* in which 30.000 men were using all their energies to outstrip each other, during the whole distance of 2000 miles—Property, by hundreds of thousand of dollars, was destroyed & throw away, cattle & horses & mules hurried along on poor feed, till they dropped down, and the only topic of interest to all, was onward, & onward—By following our track one would suppose, that a large army had been flying in hot haste, only careing to save their own lives—Wagons & ox-yokes were used for fuel—huge bonfires made of bacon & pork—thousands of kegs of Powder blowed up—broken guns & pistols strewed the road—sacks of flour & provisions throw in large heaps upon the ground—In one day I counted forty ox chains by the side of the road, & passed fifty five head of stock, dead & dying—It is supposed that one half the stock that left the States last Spring, for California died & was lost—As I look back upon this great crusade, this rush for Gold, I am lost in wonder, that so few left their bones to be a monument of this great march—Though the cholera stalked in our rear and cut off some, yet I suppose that a larger proportion escaped death than in any other instance upon record, where so large a number of men, passed over such an extent of country, depending as they were alone, upon their own resources for food—A march of 2000 miles through a wilderness was never so successfully prosecuted—and if large numbers again take the overland route, I look for much suffering & distress—Grass, our only salvation, was never so plenty, since the route was known—I have seen a dozen different men in California, who said in former years in their travels on the plains, they did not find a spear of grass, where we had good feed—All the Traders & Mountainiers we saw, said the feed was the best ever known

I feel somewhat lonesome to day, for Hank & Tappan, having bought Vans & my interest in the team have gone to hunt them up—& Van has gone to the City, & I am left alone in our cabin—And know not, how to fill this letter unless I give you an account of what has happened since I last wrote you on 17 March—Then I mentioned our connexion formed

with two other friends for the summer & fall work & that we were making a Quicksilver Machine. Within the past week, & after the machine was finished & we had obtained from the City and addition to our stock of provisions, involing an expenditure of some $180.^{00}$, "things which were about to have arriven, have arroven"—And when were at peace among ourselves, & all the world & "the rest of mankind," disturbance was caused, by Tappan declaring to Van that he was going to leave the mess—He had secretly been to work, and doing some things I did not like & I also told the Mess that I was not longer to stay in the company & proposed to sell my interest in the team & all our fixtures—At the same time Henry said he would not work in the C° any longer—I immediately made a proposition to Henry to work with him, but found out that I had been forestalled by Tappan who had already made arrangements to work with Henry—I told Henry I was sorry to part from him, but if he thought it for his own interest to work with Tappan, I had not a word to say—Van has left for S. City, and I parted with him on better terms and with better feelings on both sides than I expected —In the presence of Henry, Van said that he had been the most to blame, in our former misunderstandings, & said he was so constituted, that he could not, so easily as other men, forget such things, & he thought with me, that it was best for both of us, that we should not associated together—And thus we parted, with a good understanding, & good feelings—

I must say, I have been much disappointed in Tappan—he is of strong passions & prejudices—his likes are amorous—& his dislikes bitter —One not well calculated for a friend—As Van says, he is either very friendly or a great enemy—As our tastes, & feelings were not in unison, we never were on intimate terms—And I was sorry to have him come with us, but Henry & Van desired it, & therefore I did not oppose— Though he has not dared to create any coldness between Henry & myself, yet under the guise of friendship, he has so managed things, as to get in with Henry, and as I feel independent enough to take care of myself, I told Henry I did not ask him to leave Tappan, but that if they worked together, I should seek another partner—I told him it would be pleasanter for our wives & friends to know we were together, & that on that account & as well as my own feelings, made me feel bound to go

with him if he was willing & wished—But I could not be with Tappan —With the best of feelings he told me he thought best for *his pecuniary interest,* to go with Tappan—I told him, he was the best judge, about his own concerns, but that I did not wish to compare my powers, with the strength & endurance of Tappan, but look more to the pleasure or pain our course might give to our friends at home—I did not urge the matter very strongly—Henry & myself are on first rate terms & fast friends I believe—there has not been any jarring or trouble between us, and look upon one another as good friends & brothers in-law ought to—

The human mind & affections present a study for the curious, and in vain can they attempt to follow that mind & those affections—Who can explain the causes that have been brought to bear upon the feelings of his friends? For instance, can any one explain, the working of the human mind, when he looks upon Tappan, who without any cause, that I can discover, so cordially hates James Burton & H. Page, & yet so intimate with Henry Burton who is so nearly related to the first parties—And why Henry is so intimate with Tappan is a still greater quandary to me—But I do not mean by this last sentance to cast any blame upon Henry—far from it—for with me he has always been open & fair & friendly—I consider Henry one among a thousand—straightforward—upright—goodhearted & a true friend—

I have been thus particular in relating my situation so that you need not fear that any had happened unpleasant to Henry & myself, and though we may not often meet in California, yet will hear from one another & know each others whereabouts—I shall probably go to work with a man by the name of Rickner—though I have not yet fully decided —At any rate I feel that I can get along through the few months I shall stay here, without any trouble & I hope with good success—My health is excellent, better than it has been for years—& with prudence & care, shall hope for its continuance—The dry season is coming on fast, the weather is warm with occasional showers, & all the miners are fast completing their summer arrangements—Some going this way & some that way—all (See Page 3) anxious and seeking for a profitable place to work —I shall soon be out scouring the country & looking around—I do not certainly know where I shall locate—Henry has not yet decided where he will be—

When travelling, we rig out a little different from any thing you are accustomed to see—If we are going on a road we take only our blankets & sleep & eat at the taverns—If ranging through the country, we take blankets & provisions & camp out wherever night overtakes us—It is very rare to see a man moving about without a pack on his back, and almost all the travelling is done on foot—

Your last letter was dated 14 Dec, but I expect to receive more next week. For some reason our letters are a month longer coming than Papers—last Steamer we have heard from, brought Papers as late as 16 Feb—I shall continue to write you this summer as often as I can send down, but do not expect to have so many chances, as I have improved this winter—If it should so happen that you do not receive letters regularly, you must not think any thing strange of it—& when thus disappointed in not hearing, think *only* that Henry could not send to the Post Office—

I wish you to tell D^r^ Grinsted, that his letter addressed to the Mess was duly received, but as I had already put him to the expense of postage on one letter to him, I thought best to leave his, to be answered by the others—which I am sorry to say they have neglected—They ought to have written, for we had a long & interesting letter from him—crammed ful of all kinds of news, from Mrs Sellers & Rambler up to all the friends & acquaintances—

April 4—Yesterday when I had finished the enclosed half sheet, I found the remainder so defaced that I was obliged to take another sheet, and not feeling inclined to copy so much, send my letter in this shape—

I was reading an old New Orleans Paper last night, and came across the following couplet

"The shaft that deepest in his bosom flew
"Came from the bow pretended friendship drew"—

I assure you dear Mary, I often have had cause, to feel that shaft, and still carry the marks of one lately inflicted—Not by a real friend (H) but by a pretended friend (T)—Taking a lesson from passing circumstances, I must forget all such petty greviances, and bless my stars, that I still have some true friends, to whom I can look—

How often it happens that confidence is lost in, & trust betrayed by

those we thought friends—And if I receive many more kicks of this kind I dont know, but that the character of man will fall much in my estimation—My motto has been heretofore "to deal with evey one, as though you knew him to be *honest*" but I think I shall have to add a few letters to sentence so as to make it read *dis*honest instead of *honest* —But when I look around upon the circle of my acquaintance, I see many to whom I shall never have occasion to apply this new reading—

I am fearful this California Gold discovery will be a curse to many—if not to the country—Thousands are spending their all at the gambling table, who at home were considered good & upright men—Here Ministers are seen working on Sundays & heard to swear & curse—Deacons are seen at the Gambling table—Church members are seen owning and watching their success at a Roulette table—Faro or Monte Bank—Gambling is an *every* day & night business and in City or town, at every grocery & tavern & eating house, open & public Gambling is practised to an enormous extent—Ounces are here bet where dollars would be in the States—And I have heard, that the professed Gamblers say, that money is so plenty & easy to be made & consequently betting so high that it is necessary for them to cheat more than usual, to hold their own—When men go into these gambling houses & lay down fifty or a hundred ounces at a bet (as is often the case) they *may* break the Gambler—But in the long run the Gambler has the advantage & is sure of making largely—

I am glad I am able to say that Henry & Van Dorn & Tappan & myself have yet our *first bet* to make—And I do not think any fears need be had about our ever making a bet at a game of any kind—

Since I last wrote I have had another tooth pulled, and think I am free from the tooth-ache for the present—Both of the teeth I have lost, were sound when I left home, and if it keeps on at [this r]ate you will have a toothless, bald old man for a husband—lack-a-day, how interesting I shall be—

From a remark in D^{r} Grinsted letter about a report that a [cer]tain F——— R——— was about to take a [de]gree in Physic, I expect when I return to Woodburn to be introduced to a *Mrs* D^{r} Ellet—If there is any such thing in the wind, perhaps *Fras* will consent to let you write about it to me—The D^{r} G. also said that H——— G——— was

studying *Law,* a Yorkshire Edition—if she is soon to be bound up on that kind of a *calf skin,* I shall be mistaken — — — Though nothing will be a wonder to me, after hearing Henrietta Hopson was married to young Cramp—I begin to think that she is a fool—& lacks good sense—At any rate she is crazy on the subject of marriage & well matched couples—I begin to think she was not so much fooled by marrying old Jersey as she tried to make us think—One so anxious for a husband, as to, in the second instance, take so foolish a step as she has, deserves not the few lines I have wasted, in writing about her—Peace to her—

April 5—Henry, who will take this to the city, has not yet returned with the oxen—I expect him to day or tomorrow—But will not seal this, as long as I keep it—Thus if I recieve my letters from the City, can mention it—If I say nothing about them you may know they have not come to hand—

And now my dear Mary must I bid you good bye—And hoping that you have rec[d] my last letter, full of the reasons I have for my stay for this summer in Calafornia, I trust you will keep up good cheer & let us trust in that ever blessed God who has kept us, and looking up to Him for his best blessing to descend, upon the chosen one of my life & our dear children—I still am your true & devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

Best regards to all the family & friends—Kiss Cynthia & W[m] for their Papa—I wrote them in my last—

Adieu—

PAGEY

Write often & long letters—

Still Hank did not return, and rain the following morning, rain of the determined uncompromising "wet season" variety, made any work an impossibility. Henry read all his newspapers from end to end, advertisements, poems, and all, and then to pass the time got out his letter to Mary and placed it on his miner's scales:

P.S. April 6.

DEAR WIFEY

It rains to day, & I find out by the scales that I can still add this half sheet to my letter & come under the half ounce, or single postage—I

thought that I would enjoy the pleasure of writing a few more lines to you —I feel so happy while thus employed, that you must excuse my long letters, but perchance they may give some pleasure to my dear Mary, & serve to while away a lonesome hour—If so I shall feel amply repaid, and though perhaps not worth the perusal, yet if you look upon these lines, I know they will read more than once——I judge so, because to-day I took out your six letters already rec[d] & perused them again, and took much pleasure in so doing—And our feelings are so much in unison, & our love to each other so mutual, that I know I am not mistaken, when I thus judge your feelings, by my own—I have rec[d] more letters from you than Henry has from Teen, and sent more to you— Dont fail to keep on writing, because some of your letters are so long reaching me—they are all highly prized, and coming as they do from my dear wife are great Treasures—They are the only evidences I can have, except what is so strongly preserved by memory, that I am still dear to my Mary—

"Not forgotten! not forgotten!
Those words sweep o'er my soul,
Like lovelit waves of memory,
Which will not brook control.
Not forgotten! Oh there's music
In those gentle words for me,
The treasured tones of which call up
Fond memories of thee—"

Those words "not forgotten" bring up to memory, hours that have passed long ago, when our hearts were light & gay—Smiles & tears mingle as I think of the past, but there is something so true in our affection for each other, that time will have no influence upon it, unless these bonds (if possible) should be strengthened which bind us together—Though time may pass, and every day bring something new, there is one object that rest without a change,

"Ah! would you know this changeless thing,
Unchanged by changes, time, may bring—
Tis love's fond image on the heart,
Engraved by some mysterious art."

For it is so deeply imprinted upon our minds, and there finds a sanctuary; that all the changes of this ever changing life, can never blot it from our memory—

"It is the magnet, and the pole
Of hallowed feelings to the soul."

We do not wish to lose this "fond image" for it is the brightest ray of earthly bliss that God has given us, making bright many of the shadows cast around us, as we move on through this world—There is a sweetness, a soothing in these thoughts, as I look back upon the scenes of other days—and joy, unbounded joy reigns in my breast as I look forward to the time when these days of seperation will be past; never I trust to be passed through again, as long as God shall spare us both—And if I did not know His care was over us, & His angels ever present with us to guard, guide & protect, fear & anxiety would overcome all other feelings—

Let us look forward with confident hope to the period of meeting, when all your fears will be quelled & anxiety cease—Let hope still hold on its sweet course, & let no chains of sad remembrance bind your confiding, fond and warm heart—Let not passing doubts dusturbe your rest, but rather look to the time when happiness shall repay us, for all this anxiety & care—I am fain to look forward to those hours, when duty, joy & love, shall riegn preeminent; when it will be the aim of my life that

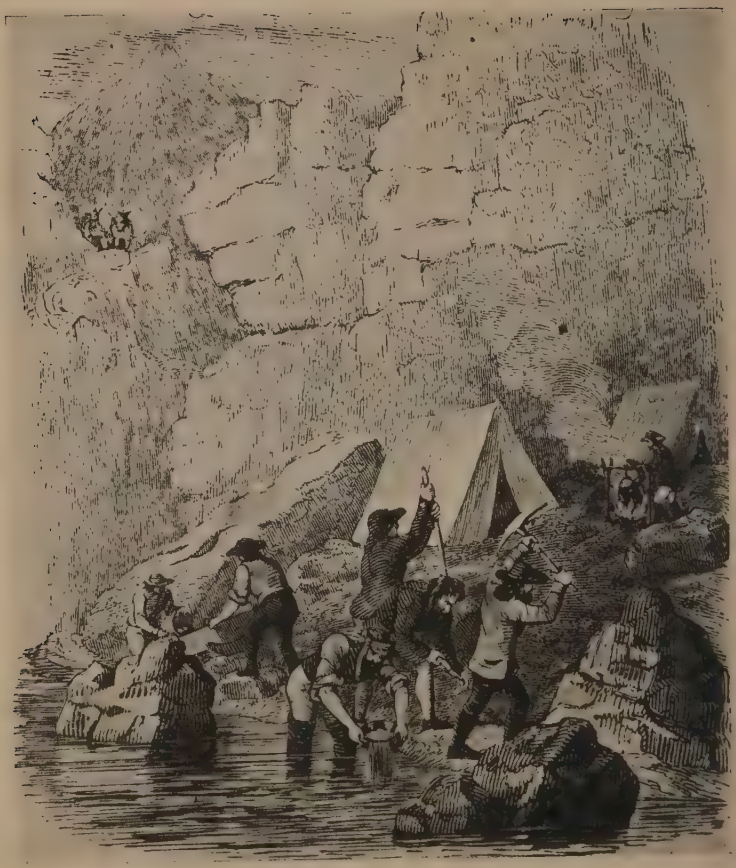
"Fear shall invade her peace no more
Nor sorrow wound the breast—"

If we view our situation with such feelings, the moments will fly swifter and the time soon come, when we can meet "meet, to part no more"—

April 7. Sunday morn—Perhaps in reading, under date of yesterday, you will wonder, what has got into your husband that he should quote poetry—The fact is dear Mary, though formerly I rarely read a scrap of poetry in the papers, yet now to pass off a long evening or a stormy day, I read all a paper contains—And as I was conning some poetry in a paper yesterday, some thoughts rushed unto my empty noddle, & created such a confusion & turmoil, that I was compelled to get rid of them, and thus you have them as they rioted in great disorder in my brain—I knew you would bear with the infliction thus put upon you,

THE ROCKER OR CRADLE METHOD OF MINING

(*From an old print*)



THE GOLD DIGGINGS

(*From an old print*)

better than any else, & this must serve as my excuse, for have you not promised to bear the burdens of this life with me? This morning I feel entirely relieved; but when I come to read said effusions over, I am tempted to throw them in the fire—

Now is about the time of day you are going to church, would I was permitted to accompany you—I feel the want of such privileges, and cannot hope to enjoy them till I return—One year ago to-day was the last sermon I heard & that in Woodburn—I fancy your thoughts are reverting to that time; even as I write are thinking of the year that has flown away since the 11th April 1849—You will get this letter some time in June, I think, and in a few months from that time will I be with you—

Give me all the news & gossip & chit-chat you can find time to write, and dont forget to write about the chilren—I like to read you letters, about them—every little thing about them and my dear wifey, very much interest

Your absent

PAGEY

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN CO
ILLINOIS

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On April eighth, Hank returned with the oxen and carried the letter to Sacramento City where he went to dispose of the partnership property, the wagon and the cattle, that a final adjustment of the affairs of the four might be made. Henry's change in plans moved on rapidly now. He immediately set out on a prospecting trip of his own to locate a suitable summer digging, a process which kept him several days. While he was gone, Van Dorn came back from his trip to the City and, having a letter for Henry, waited his former partner's return in the old shack before going into the mountains. The two compared notes on their news from home and apparently had one more comfortable talk beside the old fireplace before Tom went on his way, and then Henry, gathering his possessions together for transfer to his new partner's cabin, closed the door on that chapter of his life. It was evidently not done without a pang,

and Mary's letter was read and reread many times by the lonely man even in the few days that elapsed before he could answer it.

Was it a reflection of his own frame of mind, he wondered, or was Mary, too, finding her living arrangements difficult? He thought he sensed an undercurrent of tension, such as would be natural enough in so large a household gathered under one roof, but he could find no definite statement or complaint. Mary had been ill and she was more lonely than ever, while her fears harassed her that perhaps the ill-natured things she had said when they had quarreled before his going were making her husband reluctant to return. Henry read her pleadings for forgiveness, her avowals of devotion, with a tender pity that sought for and found the perfect answer to make. He could not even remember, he said, to what she alluded.

Tinta, too, was proving a problem, for, like many another seven year old, she had suddenly discovered the expanding possibilities of a well-told lie. Both her parents were horrified at what they could only think was depravity, and Henry, casting about for some individual whose example might be blamed for the tendency, hit on the child of a neighbor, who had been a familiar in the Rider circle, and for whom he entertained a lively dislike. With evident relief he presented her to Mary as an explanation of their small daughter's latest sin:

MUD SPRINGS 19 AP^{L} 1850

MY DEAREST

Since my last to you dated 3 & 7 inst, your letter of 1 & 6 Jan. has been rec^{d}—I had been gone from the cabin two or three days prospecting, & as I came tramping back, my thoughts were far away,—in imagination I was again with you, for I knew that on that day, your thoughts would be unusually occupied about me, for one year had passed since I bid you farewell—When I arrived at the cabin, I was made glad by Van Dorn (who had just ret^{d} from the City) handing me your letter,—and at the same time he had one from his wife of 22 Jan. in which she said you had just rec^{d} my Nov. letter—It made me doubly happy to hear from you, & also to learn that my Nov letter had come to hand—I had fears that my Sept letter would not reach you, and therefore I was the more

anxious to hear of the receipt of my Nov letter, hoping that your anxiety on my account would be lessened—Although the 11 Ap[l] 1849 was a day of sorrow & grief, & I fear from the tone of your letters the beginning of sorrow & care & much suffering to you,—yet I must look back upon the 11 Ap[l] 1850 as one of the happiest days I have spent since I left you—Though I walked some twenty miles over higher mountains & steeper hills, than you ever saw, with a heavy pack on my back, yet the news from you, made me forget fatigue, & drove slumber from my eyes—Of a truth could I say

"The dawing of morn, the daylight's sinking
The nights long hours, still find me thinking
Of thee, thee, only thee"—

And the longer I am absent from you, the more truly do these lines apply to me, and I am almost sorry to have this rainy day take me from my work, for I am so anxious to hasten my return, that I could not be satisfied to lie still; and having washed my dirty clothes & mended my shirts & stockings, & now cooking a mess of beans, I find myself very happy as I write these lines, knowing that when they meet your eyes they will afford you pleasure—Tis only a lone separation that enables us to put the true value upon these memorials of our love for each other,—for when I read your letters, your devotion to me is so strongly pictured, that they are read again & again, with avidity, though I must truly say they are penned with sadness—I hope before you receive this that your care & anxiety about me, will no longer affect your health, for I find that if you answer all I have written since that Nov letter, that you will have time for little else—And I hope they have borne you such tidings of your Pagey, that it has drove away those melancholy feelings which have so beset you—And as you say, these feelings, made you sick, I hope they have departed from your breast & that your health is much improved—I have been anxious to write you frequently & have so done; that I might assist you in driving off these feelings, for I was sure they would do you no good—Will not my dear Mary keep up the same feelings she had, when she wrote in her last letter, *viz* "Trust in God &c" If we have full confidence in God that he will do all that is right & that is best, can we not feel, that we can look upon our seperation with more

cheerfulness, & have that hope, which is truly a gift from Heaven, that we shall meet & all will be well—It is this trust, this hope, which enables me to follow the path I am now treading, and do not think you have no influence with your husband, my dear wife, if I still adhere to my reasons for staying this summer in California—I am so sure you will approve of them, that I stay though repeatedly urged by you to hasten my return—

From the general tenor of your letters lately rec[d], I am well satisfied that there is something to cause you to be unhappy, in addition to my absence and the severe attacks of the Neuralgia you have—Though I am somewhat in the dark, yet I hope, that all these unpleasant things are done away—If not, I can only say, in the absence of all *certain* knowledge, that any course you may take to promote your happiness will meet my hearty approval—And whether in Woodburn, New York or Vermomt, or any place you wish I will come to you when I return—Dont say at any place you are not wanted, or treated well, but go & live where you will be happy—If you had been more particular in writing, (as I think you ought to have been) I should know better what to write & do—Dont hesitate to use all the money you receive, solely for this puspose —I shall be much pleased to learn that such has been your course———You make allusion to something that might have been unpleasant to me, about the time of our sale—Of a truth, my dear Mary, I cannot recollect any thing of the kind, and am sorry that they are remembered by you—When I left you, I told you every thing of that kind was forgiven & forgotten, & they have all passed from my mind—And knowing you would forgive & forget all that I ever done to make you unhappy, I have also endeavored to forget them—And you do me much wrong, if you think that any such thing has had an influence upon me, to make me prolong my stay here—Our embarrassed circumstances did I am well aware make us both unhappy at times—but I think we have learnt some things from past experience, and by our separation know better how to value our happiness, ever in the future to let such things affect us—If you could see my heart, and know the devoted affection I have for you, & that I only can think of you as my greatest treasure, & that my love & confidence is so bright, that nothing else can there be seen, you would be able to realise the sacrifice & denial, I am compelled to make

to keep me from you—Such agony of heart, such emotions as I experience, when I think of your ill health & melancholy & despondency & unhappiness, I cannot describe—You, who know me so well, can perhaps have some idea of my feelings while I am thus by stern necessity *compelled* to stay away from "my life, my love"—Sometimes I think I never, till I left you, knew how much love I had for you—a different feeling, a new degree of affection h[as] taken possession of my breast; a better & holier love, that I feel is above every thing I ever experienced—I trust I am cured of my quick & cross disposition & shall do my best, & I feel that I shall succeed better than formerly, in making you happy—Therefore dont let despondency & gloom be settled upon you, but with bright feelings let the days pass till I return—For I shall be happy only when you are happy, and I feel, yea know, that when we meet again, you will meet me more than half way, with these new feelings I have, and do all you can to enable me to be more worthy of you—I feel that you have been too good for me, a better wife than I deserved, but now you have my whole heart & love & what more can I do besides endeavoring to make you happy—I feel so confident that we shall meet next fall *or* winter, and then be so happy, that it almost makes me forget our present separation. I really hope & expect to hear that your health has much improved & that you will soon again feel well—Dont fail to be particular in writing about all things that concern you & the children ———I am sorry you did not have the money to go with your cousin W^m^ to N. Y. if he went & hope, if you wish to, that you will spend all the time after you recieve this, at any place you wish, or can be happy—I hope have not been disappointed in the calculations I have heretofore made, about money that you would receive—You ought to have some $300 from all sources by the time you receive this—

I have been very much interested in reading the verses you wrote, and have thought much about them; they find an answering thrill in my bosom—They are so applicable that I fancy, they were wrote on purpose for us—Did you write them, or not? I have sometimes fancied you could do such things—

There is one part of your letter, I hardly know how to answer—I refer to the fact of Tinta's telling falsehoods—I am so grieved & so astonished

& so sick at heart when I think that my darling daughter has been thus wicked that I hardly know what to write—If she has reformed, you need not tell her what I write, but I write, and you must use it, as circumstances require—I leave it to your judgment, for so long a time will have passed, since you wrote, before you receive this, that I do not wish to have any thing harsh said to her, from me, if she has avoided such things & been a good girl—But O if she is still guilty, tell her that is she does not wish to break our hearts she must do different—Is it possible that Tinta, who was always so truthful, that I could always believe her, word, has forfieted that good esteem, I had—no, I must believe she has not been naughty again—Only a few days before I rec[d] your letter, was I looking at a prettyly shaped piece of Gold I have, and thinking it would delight Tinta to have the same to wear as a breast pin, when she was a little older; but I have put it away to decide at some future day what I shall do with it—I dont want to see it again for the present———— Not till I commenced writing this page could I imagine where Tinta had learnt to lie—But I have just thought, & for the first time, since I left you of that little *pest* Betty—This is where Tinta learnt such things —and another new thought is, perhaps *sister* Betty as Fras used to call her, has been the cause of trouble in other ways—She is such a darling of Corinths that, I have no doubt has made you much trouble—Enough of her, I cant bear to think of such vermin—

You will see, as you read this letter, that I have not written it, with a view, to have others read it, but you may do as you wish about showing it to others—But I have a feeling that this & all my future letters will not find you at Corinths house, & shall for the future continue to write only for your eye—But still you can show this & all others to whom you wish—to your Father, Mother, Teen, Fras, Ja[s], or Sarah & I shall not care—Keep them to yourself or read part or all of them to others as you see fit, for I am going to write just as I feel, & call things by their right names for I cannot bear to write with any restraint upon me—And you the dear wife of my choice, & the best wife anybody ever had, shall know all my thoughts—My feelings of confidence & love are such, that I cannot keep any thing from you even if I wished—And I feel that my whole heart is yours, and I know it will give you satisfaction to know all my feelings—And your love for me is so deep & true that I feel as I write,

from time to time, that I am fully understood by you, though I may often fail to give a clear description of my feelings—

Van Dorn wished me to say & you to tell his wife, that he has gone on a prospecting tour & may be gone a month & may not be able in that time to write—Henry has gone to the City & I have not yet heard from him—I told him what I wrote in my last about our concerns & he said all was right—Since he left I have been messing with my new partner Jacob Rikener and I find him a very pleasant man—He is of German origin, about 43 years old—a tanner by trade—of good habits & morals, a pleasant, kind hearted & honest man—His Father was a German-Swiss & came to America some 35 years since—Mr R. has lived of late years in Missouri—I feel better contented & happier with him, than I have done of late—& a restraint & a load has been taken off my spirits, which has been burdensome to me of late—We shall probably work within striking distance of our cabin for the present, and when the waters fall go into summer quarters—I may not be able to write so often this summer, as I have done this winter — — therefore dont be disappointed if you dont get letters so often. My health has not been so good for years, as it is now—I feel strong and hearty & am not so easily tired—I feel almost certain of success & shall do all in my power to hasten my return—And I must now close with the same injunction you use "Trust in God" I repeat what I have before said, there is no danger from the Indians—My best regards to all the *true* friends—Kiss the dear children for their Papa; and pray much for your absent yet ever true and devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

I commenced this letter with the intention of using two sheets, but find them too heavy for single postage & therefore write only on a sheet & a half. I got your letter a month earlier by your addressing it to Sacramento—Of course you will keep on sending to that office till I direct differently—

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^{O}
ILLINOIS
U. STATES

no postage marked

A month later, Henry went to Sacramento to make his last arrangements and to buy his provisions for the summer. He found other changes in the city beside the newly completed levee. The relaxing standards, reflected in his last description of the gambling at Mud Springs, here had completely given way. The roaring hectic vice of the mining town was open and unashamed. Hubbard's Round Tent, with its music and gorgeously decorated bar, its gallery of obscene pictures, and its crowds, was no longer the only gaming center of the city. Hotels vied with two theaters, the Eagle and the Tehama, in providing entertainment. A fever of speculation, based on the phenomenal rise in land values, gripped the town and banks were flourishing.

An alteration, too, was very apparent in the temper of the inhabitants of the place towards Captain Sutter. The memory of the days when he had succored the distressed on the overland trail was lost in the excitement and irritation of the present day. The wholesale robbery of the Captain's herds was going on. During the confusion, five men had run off a bunch of cattle, sold them for $60,000 and departed for the States, their fortunes made. All this was known and deplored by the law-abiding. But on the other hand, it was very hard for newcomers to understand Sutter's absolute refusal to allow any settlement on his land, his clinging to the old boundaries when the city needed room, his starting suit against the squatters in the local courts instead of coming to some adjustment, he who had more land than he ever could hope to handle. The Captain, firm in the righteousness of prior ownership, was fighting his way to victory through a second contest in the courts, and feeling against him on the part of a vociferous minority was beginning to run high. Henry heard mutterings on every corner and rumors of the formation of a Squatters' Association that would be strong enough to challenge the ex-Alcalde's power.

Henry listened and wondered as he went about the town making his purchases. When all was in hand, having a considerable balance of which to dispose, he made his way to the bank of "S. K. and A.,"

possibly an early combination of the merchants Smith and Keith with the banker Adams, bought three copies of a draft for Mary, mailing the first with a hurried note, and deposited some five hundred dollars which he still possessed in the banker's care. Then he was free to watch for the mail and to look for friends on the thronging streets, for the advance guard of the new season's immigration, those who had taken the southern routes or who had wintered at Salt Lake, were beginning to arrive.

There was a bundle of letters for him at the Post Office, where clerks were struggling hopelessly to maintain even a semblance of an irregular service. His news from Woodburn brought word that Mary's plucky little mother, Elizabeth, was fighting a battle with ill-health, and that plans were quietly being laid for the care which it might be necessary to give the two youngest children, Richard and Angie. Fras had put in a claim for the little sister who had always been her pet, and Mary wanted the small brother, if Henry would allow it. From Rutland, also, the tale was one of failing health, where Henry's father, surveyor, lawyer, and banker, was being obliged to lay aside his tasks one by one:

SACRAMENTO CITY 18 MAY 1850

MY DEAR WIFE

I scratched off a few lines when I first came down and mailed it in great haste, thinking I should find liesure to write you more fully before I left the City—I shall leave this tomorrow morning for the mines, and shall firstly make my way to my old cabin at Mud Springs & then probably go onto the Cosumes to work—But will write the first chance to send down & let you know my whereabouts—

All of your letters up to the 11 Mar have been rec[d]—and you only can begin to realise the great pleasure they afford me—To hear from and about my dear wifey & children are the greatest pleasures I can expect to enjoy in Calafornia—And tired with the bustle & heat of this place, I hasten my departure from it, glad to go to the mountains again—

But one of D[r] Grinsteds letters has been rec[d] to my knowledge, and I have heretofore mentioned that the boys have not written—But as I

have, I trust the D^r will not think I neglect him—And I am much gratified to learn that he still takes so much interests in us all—both you at home & we who are absent—and am much obliged to him for the recipe for the Dysentery, which I shall be sure to preserve, not that I expect to have to use it—but for fear I may—To satisfy you that my health is as good as it has been for three or four years, I will say that, I am as heavy now, as I ever was (156″) in my life—And I feel better than I have for years & can endure more than I could ever since I ret^d with you from the East—But because I feel so stout & strong, dont feel afraid that I will work when it is too hot, or try to do to much—Too well do I know the importance of good health, especially here away from friends, to take a course that I believe will bring on sickness—I believe I have, since here, been very prudent and shall endeavor always so to be —The summer will be hot & sickly here, but when you hear about such things dont apply them to the mines for they are much healthier—I dont think the weather here (Sac. City) is much warmer now, than I have seen in May in Ill^s and as we are in the same latitude, I suppose it will not be much hotter this summer, at least would not, if we had any rains—But we had this same hot weather last year after we left Fort Hall—& I do not fear it much—It is the eastern & northern men who make the great fuss about heat—

I am very sorry to hear of your mothers continued ill health, and as you well say, it can do no hurt to speak of that event to which we all look, *viz* our own death & that of our friends—If your mother should be called away before I return I shall feel her loss very much, and miss her affectionate greeting when I return—Any arrangement you may wish to make about Richard can be talked over by you & the rest, and when I return I will do all I can for him—If we are situated so that we can take him, perhaps when I return we may think best so to do—But such things can only be arranged effectually, after my return, it might all be left by you (if you think best) till I return—

It gave me pleasure to hear from my Mountain home again, I suppose I must try to make up my mind that I am not to see my Father again, on this earth—God grant that I may live so as to meet him in heaven, for I feel that his inheritance is sure—Your caution & good advice about the interest of my soul, are read with much pleasure—For I feell

the need of such advice here, in this land of temptation—Pray much for me—

I am afrain you will be disappointed to learn that except the common quartz, I have not been able to pick up any thing in the mines, that are worth saving as curiosities—But if I come across any thing that I can save, I have not forgot the promise I made you, to save such things for wifey—I may find some shells & Chinese fixings when I go to the Bay, that may be worth taking along—

I hope John Gragg got my letter before he left, for I wrote it to aid him, in his outfit——I saw yesterday Mr Holton & Mrs Longs Francis —They have been in Cal. about one month, & are both very well— Holton came from Salt Lake by the southern route & got in safe—

Enclosed I send a duplicate of a check for $100 on Chandler Starr & C° of N. Y.—I sent one copy in my last & send the money so that you may be sure to have all you want—I still have enough to bring me home, but as the season is so advanced, do not think it prudent to cross the Isthmus for the present—So next fall or winter I shall bid Cal. good bye—

I have just been looking over this, & am ashamed to send [it] but as I have not time to write another, & my attention is so distracted by what is going on around me, that I think I will trust to the good nature of my dear Mary & send this—I wont call this or the one wrote the other day answers to your long & sweet letters—You may be assured I think to much of them thus to compare them with mine—If ever a husband had cause to be happy in the love & affection of his wife I am the man— Joy & honor & blessings go with thee, my dear, dear wife, & may the time soon come, when I can take your kisses not from paper, but from your own sweet lips—That word "kiss" in yours has been pressed to my lips more than once or twice, and here is my kiss in return, right here

KISS

Kiss the dear children for their Papa, & let them both know that I think much about them & hope they will continue to be good—The months will soon pass when I can clasp you all to my bosom—May the best of heavens blessings rest upon my dear Mary & children is the

continued prayer of your
husband

HENRY PAGE

Remember me to M^r and M^rs King—& give my best love to all the family—

I have had Eleven letters from you & wrote as you see 18—since I left—

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN C^O
ILLINOIS Postage 40¢

When Henry came back to Mud Springs, a surprise awaited him in Rikener's decision to leave the mines, a change which evidently brought more relief than embarrassment. Even though it did necessitate a hunt for a new partner, the delay was not serious, for before the end of May he had formed a new association, had climbed the ridge which separated the American River from the Consumnes, and had taken up a claim on a river-bar.

Again with his strange luck of near-success, he had picked a stream which later developments were to prove one of the richest in all California. In a gulch by Sutter's abandoned saw-pit, one man got a pint measure full of nuggets before breakfast, so the trader Tom Fallon declared. But fortune for a miner even on a rich stream was often a fickle affair. The men along the Consumnes told tales to illustrate this. There was the man called in to arbitrate between two who were contending over their boundaries and who was given a narrow strip of the disputed territory for his reward. Rumor had it that the two large claims had to be abandoned as worthless, while the arbitrator had sold his fringe for seven thousand dollars. There was the story of the newcomer fresh from the States who blew in to Pilot Hill and was directed by a group of facetious but solemn-faced old timers to the most unlikely spot in the gulch, and who made the most sensational strike of the year. There was the negro slave who dreamt of gold beneath a certain cabin and who, after borrowing money from his reluctant master to purchase the shack, took twenty thousand dollars out of the hole beneath it before his claim was half worked. There was Marshall, the first discoverer, who could

direct every one else where to find gold, but who had not made a single noteworthy strike himself. And there was the prospector who returned from a trip with what he thought was a fair amount of gold in his sack, only to find that his wife had made more during his absence by taking in washing.

So Henry and his partner, though on the borders of fortune, did not find such rewards for their labor that they were unwilling to consider another locality when it was presented with sufficient enthusiasm:

CAMP ON COSUMES RIVER, CALIFORNIA,
SUNDAY 2ND JUNE 1850—

BELOVED WIFE

I wrote from the city on the 14 & 18 May, each letter enclosing a check for $100—and as I suppose they went by the same steamer, I now enclose the third check, only one of which will be paid—Your Bro. can get the money for you, on the draft, if the others have failed to come to hand—You see by the date of this that I am again in the mines, and though I do not expect to send this off to the office this week, thought I could not better employ this day, than to have a chat with wifey—When I came back to the cabin at Mud Springs, I learnt that Rickener had concluded to leave the mines, and as he did not suit me, I was glad to have him go—He was too fickle minded & notional for me, & withal of a jealous disposition,—I soon found that Horace Bisbee, an acquaintance, had no partner, & I have associated with him for the present & may stay together all summer—He is from Michigan (Monroe) & being just about as much a Yankee as self, I think we shall like each other—I am now thirteen miles from Mud Springs & between 40 & 50 miles from S. City—on the main river (Cosumes) three miles below the forks—By the River it is about five miles to the forks, & most of the way a perfect canôn (pronounced thus can-yon)—I am on a large bend of the river on the North side at the place marked [on accompanying diagram], on a large Bar—about 20 men are at work here and mostly doing well—This Bar comprises all the level ground at this place, & we have a hill or rather mountain of two miles to descend to get to this place—I have been up through the canôn, but compelled often to climb 200 feet up the ledges of rock to get along, and with difficulty able to get through—The moun-

tains 6 or 800 feet high on each side and too steep to climb unless one used his hands as well as feet—We see some grand sights of this kind in California, but as the gold region is very hilly & mountainous, we think more of the beauties of a level country—Only at certain points can wagons be taken on to the rivers, say at a distance of 8 or 10 miles apart—And then it takes all the team of six or eight head, to haul the empty wagon up the hills from the deep gorges through which the Rivers invariably run—

I came in here a week yesterday and as the river is falling fast & we are doing pretty well think we will stay here for the present—As we were cooking our dinner on Thursday last, I looked up the hill, and saw Hank & Judge coming down—They stoped about two hours & then went up the river—They were both well & I had the pleasure of telling Hank, the news rec^{d} by your 11″ March letter, which was one month later than he had rec^{d}—He had a letter from D^{r} Grinsted & felt much gratified to learnt the particulars about Teen's cough—His as well as my anxiety was great to know about Teen's health, & though Tho^{s} had not told Hank, what frightful things his wife had wrote—he had told me & though I made much allowance for her high colouring I was glad to learn that the D^{r} had wrote Hank about it——You can hardly realise the anxiety I have had for your health, dear wifey, but am relieved to hear in your last letters that you are so much better—O that I could have been with you to do all I could to have alleviated your pains & do those thousands little things that are so soothing, because perhaps, done by the one so dear—But with your health improved & pleasant weather, I hope you will be able to pass the summer & fall pleasantly, for slow (to us) time rolls on, & the time will soon come on, if we are both spared, when I shall once more have the pleasure of clasping you to my heart—The anticipation of this great pleasure, for us both, is the greatest enjoyment I have, which added to recollection of the past, is all the enjoyment I have in this country—

Judge had his money buried near the Cabin, & some one has found his hiding place & stole all his gold, some $900—No clue as yet to the thief & I suppose he will hardly recover it—This will probably keep him in California some time longer than he expected—

Since writing the above I have eat my dinner; & what do you think it

was? A dish of Bread & Milk—This is the second meal of this kind I have had since I left Ill[s] & it relished very well—Milk is so dear, at one dollar per quart, that I cant afford it very often—You caution me not to be too sparing of the expense in food—When you come to see the amt. in cost to live you will think that I ought to have lived on the fat of the land—But as it, we do very well, as it regards eating—We have good, hearty, & healthy food & have all the variety we can, without vegetables—We have coffee, tea, sugar, molasses, salt beef & pork, dried apples & beans & flour—& occasionly fresh beef—This is good enough for any one, but necessary for ones health—Didn't I feast high when at the City, on fresh Salmon, Mutton, Beef, & on lettuce, radishes, sweet & irish potatoes & all for one dollar per meal—Pies are worth one dollar in the mines—And there is hardly a place, where gold is dug, but that near by one can find a store—Liquors are sold in large quantities at one dollar to one & half dollar per bottle or 25 cents per drink—When they get any of my money for liquor it will be after to day—We have a Store on this bar & they sell a good deal—

We have a nice little camp to sleep in—Made by sewing two sheets together & hanging a blanket at one end—The other end is open—Our provision all set out side—We have a comfortable & blanket to sleep on & three blankets to cover us—For a pillow I use my clothes bag—With perfect impunity one can sleep in this way—We undress as usual & sleep sound—I have become so accustomed to camp accomodations that I do not know that I can ever sleep on a good bed—Perhaps I may be induced some time to try it by way of experement—I still eat with a knife & fork & plate, but cannot remember how to use a cup & saucer ———— The weather is very pleasant here & not too warm for work—Something like the weather in Ill[s] at this time—We have a fine breeze *up* the river every day—and a good blow *down* the river every night, which makes a coat sometimes necessary in the morning ———— You say something about curiosities & such things—Dont expect too much, though I shall spare no pains to get all I can—Mr Bisbee (my partner) is very fond of flowers & we are expecting to get all the flower seeds, that are new, that we can —I have three kinds put up, & they will soon begin to ripen so that I shall perhaps be able to get many other kinds. You can form but little idea of the variety & beauty of the flowers here, & to my eyes all new ones

—But the hills are fast drying up & the soil is becoming much parched—My health is very good and goodbye for to-day—

Wednesday 5th We are taking our noon rest & partner is reading the last N. Y. Tribune rec^{d}, dated April 13th—I expected to have had a letter, & may yet get one before I seal this; if so, I will mention it—Since I wrote on Sùnday I have again read over your four last letters & I wish much that I could write something in return, that would interest you half as much & give you one tithe of the pleasure, your kind, dear, sweet letters do to me—But I am fearful that, in writing so often & so long letters, I am frequently saying things, three or four times over—If so, put them down to my forgetfulness, for when any thing, comes into my noddle that I think will interest you, I am sure to write it, & then afterwards think perhaps, I have said the same before—We have so little variety in our life, nothing but eat, sleep, & work, that I no doubt often write you tedious & simple letters, but poor me, how need I expect any thing else, when I am shut out from all society, living in a wilderness, surrounded mostly by men who are like our regular *suckers*—But you have to share all this with me, for I know you are thinking that this is true enough—And still Pagey will stay away from all that he holds so dear, why is it? Not because he dont love his wife & children, but poverty & debts are the cause—

I have read with much pleasure & delight all you have said about the children, Willie's & Tinta's chat are just the thing for you to write to their papa—The dear little ones, how I wish I could see them—tell them how much papa thinks about them & love's them—I am very glad to hear that Tinta is so much interested in her books, it will give me great pleasure, when I return, too see how much she has improved in her studies—I trust she is a good daughter, & quite a little lady in her manners. And so Willie is in his *Ab-s*,—encourage him, by telling him Pape hopes he will be able to read quite well when I return—Give them both a sweet kiss for their Papa — — — And you the dear, loved wife of my bosom, the partner of my joys & sorrows; the best of wives,—how can I tell you one mite of the love for & confidence in you, that fills my whole heart—My tongue could not express all I feel, how much less can I put it on paper—If thus not able to tell all I feel, I hope my actions & conduct will show you that you are not mistaken in all the love & trust

you have in your husband—If spared to meet on this earth, our experience will have been such, that I have no doubt we shall be happier than ever—I feel that my love for you, increases every day & steam will appear a slow motive power, when I take leave of this, to hasten to my dear wife & children. Goodbye for today for I must to work——I have three more varieties of flower seeds for you—

Friday noon 7th—If I mistake not, your last, acknowledged the recpt of N° 9 Dec 16th—And as I sent the 352$ by Hoit on 27 Jan N° 11, I am very anxious to hear from you, just at this time—I have no doubt but that Hoit has sent Wm T the money, but of course am desirous to know the fact, as well on Wm T account, as to know how much you recd—I may have misunderstood or rather fancied from some of your former letters that you had some troubles with those you board with; which as I was not informed by you of the particulars, may have led me to write some things, which had better, not have been written. As you say something about this affair in some of your last letters, I fancy you are better contented or perhaps better treated—I hope that what I wrote will cause you no uneasiness, & now I mention it, before I have the answers to those letters, so that you may know, that I feel now that I may have been wrong & trust you are happy at your Bro's—But sometimes I fancy I still am not mistaken, the more so, as you write that Corinth is quite *sizeable* —Whatever course you have taken, I shall feel that you have done perfectly right—For I know if you have stayed, when you, for your own sake, ought to have gone, that you had rather suffer wrong that to do that which might cause greater trouble in the family connexion—I am happy in being thus able to write that my wife, will not do any thing wrong—For if any one should say ought against you, I feel that he would not be believed by me, for you my dear wifey, in my eyes, are as pure as the driven snow—Jealousy & suspicion find no corner to lodge in my heart, for it is so filled with love & devotion for you & so much joy that I have such a dear wife as I know you to be———Next Sunday I may carry this to Mud Springs, to send to the City, in hopes then to find a letter from you—If so I will finish this, at that time—

Sunday Morn 9th—I came up from the Cosumes to this place, Mud Springs, yesterday afternoon—But was sadly disappointed in finding that the man who was to get my letters, had forgot to inquire at the Post

Office for me—I am so sure that there is a letter from you, that I feel somewhat in the dumps this morning — — — We have just heard from some friends who have gone onto the middle fork of the American River, that they want my Partner & self to come up—We shall probably go back to the Cosumes & sell what we can, & go up on the American—Of course our object in going is to get gold—I mention this now, for fear I may not find a chance to send you a letter from that point—If I have a chance to send down will be sure to improve it—but you must not think any thing is amiss if you do not hear again for six or eig(ht) weeks—My health is good, & no doubt it will continue good, espicially as I am going higher up among the mountains—I shall go back to the Cosumes by Hank's camp—I heard from him last night—

Well I must close & say good bye once more—Love to all the friends and a double share for yourself & children—May God bless you is the prayer of your

devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

MRS. MARY A. PAGE
WOODBURN
MACOUPIN COUNTY
ILLINOIS

postage 40¢

At this point, three letters are missing and only the barest outline of the next three months may be made out from allusions in the later letters. Henry evidently returned to the Consumnes, probably by way of Hank's camp, for the two brothers-in-law kept cognizance of each other's movements, and in that country of disorganized mails this could only be done by contact. With Bisbee, he then gathered up his belongings and moved to the new location on the American River, where his friends were having such good luck. But again they were next door to fortune rather than in possession themselves, and after two poor months, during which they barely made enough to pay the exorbitant prices for supplies, they gave it up. Bisbee remained at the diggings to sell out their claim and equipment, while Henry came down to Sacramento to look for some other

employment to fill in the time until the weather should be suitable for the homeward bound trip across the Isthmus.

As he was doubtless congratulating himself that he had banked enough money from his winter's winnings to take him home, and that whatever he might earn could be used to start him and his family anew, it must have been a staggering blow to learn that "S. K. and A." had failed and he was penniless. There could be no thought now of a return to Woodburn. He would have to begin again and at once. At this juncture he ran into Henry Sheldon, his boyhood friend and his classmate at Middlebury. Sheldon had a store in the city and, while he did not really need an extra clerk, he offered to make a place for Henry, giving him board and shelter for such services as he could render, and promising him the first vacancy in his employ. With clerks constantly lured away by the enticing tales of the gold-fields, an empty place might reasonably be expected at any time. Meanwhile Page had a foothold in the town and could have his eyes open for an opportunity to invest a small amount of capital if his partner had any success in selling out the claim. Henry was only too glad to avail himself of the offer, for at all costs he wanted to remain in town. Mary's letters had mysteriously ceased to arrive and he was wild with anxiety for news from home. He knew that her cousin William Matthew Rider, brother of that Lucy who had died of the cholera, was on his way across the plains and could bring him certain news, though grown somewhat stale on the journey. And Hank and Tom might either of them come to town with letters of their own which would give him indirect tidings of his family.

So he watched the milling crowd through the store windows for familiar faces, and discussed with Sheldon the chances of making money as an express rider carrying mail to the mining camps. He had vivid memories of the prices paid for the various missives he had received, and he learned that the equipment required, a horse and a saddle, could be obtained even for the modest return he hoped to receive from Bisbee's sale of their common property. He even

went so far in committing himself to this new trade as to direct Mary to write him in care of the Express.

Another element of uncertainty had been added to his thoughts of home by a letter from his sister Julia in Rutland, telling him that his father was dead. His grief over this loss in the lonely situation in which he found himself was almost overwhelming; and mingled with it was the fear that the farm in Woodburn, never completely cleared of debt, might be so involved now in his father's estate as to be lost to him and Mary. From every angle the future lowered grim and threatening that fall of 1850.

CHAPTER XII

The Express Rider

SACRAMENTO CITY was seething with the excitement of the Squatters' Riots. That association which had been the subject of whispered conjecture in May had come into the open and had been fighting the cause of the ejected settlers through judicial channels. The case had been lost in the lower tribunals and appeal to the Superior or Supreme Bench was denied. A motion to set aside this decision was argued before Judge Willis in the County Court on August eighth, but again the judgment was unfavorable, and Willis sustained the action of his colleagues below. This last reversal of their hopes roused a storm of indignation among the squatters, who openly accused the courts of favoring Captain Sutter to the exclusion of all justice. When a daring poster was discovered on the morning of the eleventh in every conspicuous place, the fiery suggestions fell on tinder well prepared.

It stated that the settlers were "determined to disregard all decisions of courts in land cases, and all summonses or executions by the sheriff, constable, or other officials of the present county or city. . . . If there is no appeal from Judge Willis the settlers and others on the first show of violence to their persons or property, either by sheriff or other persons, under color of any execution or writ of restitution based on any judgment or decree of any court in this county in an action to recover possession of land, have *deliberately resolved to appeal to arms* and protect their sacred rights, if need be, with their lives."

A stormy meeting was held on the new levee, but no disorder followed until four days later, when the house of Madden, the squatter whose situation was being made the test case, was sur-

prised and taken from its rioters' garrison. The mob gathered, was beaten off, returned with reënforcements and drove out the officers of the law. Elated with this success, forty armed men collected on the levee at the foot of I Street. When the mayor rode out and ordered them to disperse, some one in the crowd shot him down, and a running fight followed in which three men were killed and two more wounded.

The law-abiding citizens of the town, under the leadership of one Doctor Robinson, organized in the interests of order and might have been able unaided to end the confusion, but the following day, when the sheriff was killed while attempting to arrest some squatters outside the town, the Governor appealed to the military for aid. On August 17 the soldiers arrived and in two days more quiet had been restored.

But, though Captain Sutter had won the first round of the contest, the stupendous robbery of his flocks and herds went on. By 1852 the settlers had taken all the livestock he owned and they were strong enough to keep the matter of his land in litigation for ten years. In the end he was granted one third of his original possessions, but the cost of obtaining this boon had been so great that he was completely ruined. For a while the State of California made him an allowance in recognition of his services in the early days, but this was finally allowed to lapse, and the one-time ruler of no mean principality died in obscurity in 1880.

Henry characteristically says nothing of all this confusion and danger, unless, which seems highly improbable, some vivid description was included in the last of the lost letters; although he evidently found relief and escape from the very real temptations of the town in the writing of long letters home. He talks instead of meeting Alf Davis, the Woodburn blacksmith, from whom the boys had bought part of their ox team, of watching for Cousin William Rider and Hank, of hearing good news of Tom Van Dorn; he hints at the possibility that if the farm is left to him by his father he may

yet be able to start for home. Anything to interest Mary, but nothing to worry her seems then as always his motto:

SACRAMENTO CITY 10 SEPT 1850

DEAR WIFEY

Another steamer has arrived, but brought no letter for Pagey but I dont know that I have any fault to find, certainly not with my dear Mary, who has been the best of correspondents—Perhaps Uncle Sam, may be some to blame, for this mail left the 1st Aug & your last recd was dated 3rd July—Last night I met Alfred B Davis, who had that day arrived,—his health is good & has been good—He stayed with me last night & has left town this morning, for the mines—It did me much good to have a chat with him, for he had seen you so lately, & though I could tell him the news from Woodburn &c yet the thought was pleasing to me, to imagine that he had seen you since I left—I gave him all the information I could about the mines, for which he seemed very grateful.

I expected to have seen Henry Burton ere this, as he was expected down, but I have not seen or heard from him—I have not yet heard from Cousin Wm Rider—

It is supposed one half the emigration *is in,* and the town is much crowded, as well as the mines—Numbers are leaving for the States—To day I was at the River, when the Steam Boats left for the Bay, & when I looked upon the great crowd on board, & thought most of them were bound for home, my heart sunk within me, as I thought that I could not join them—All that have been fortunate enough to realise *their pile,* are taking the straight *chute* for their sweet homes—But among the number of those who are compelled to abide longer, away from all the endearments of their friends & families, is your Henry—Since May I have not made enough to pay expenses, & like thousands of others have been disappointed in my summers opperations—And therefore I must stay till I can replenish my purse somewhat—I am not yet receiving wages with my friend Sheldon, but it is expected his book-keeper will leave soon—if so I have his place—But I should not stop long for this if, I was not anxious to see Hank, & I know not where to find him, only by staying here, for he will expect to find me here, when he comes down —And I must see my old partner to have a settlement with him—And

besides I wish very much to meet Counsin W^m R. & am willing, for his sake to stop a little longer in town—But as it is yet quite uncertain where I shall be located the remainder of my stay in Cal. I think that I will revoce the directions given in my last about sending letters to Gregorys Express & for the future you will send by Mail, as heretofore—But as long as I am where I can send to the Office I will write by every Steamer, that is twice a month & thus keep you reading letters all the time.

But my dear Molly, you must not think that I willingly stay away from you—No—far from it—For I would rather fly to meet you, than any thing else, that I can do—Almost evey hour I think much of you & try to imagine what you are doing—I fancy I can see you my dear wifey & the dear children, & wish & long to be with you—And when I review my thoughts as I lay down at night, I really believe that I *do* love you—And as I told Alfred Davis, that even if I cared nought on my own account, yet I continually felt a wholesome restraint, & something that helped me not to hesitate to avoid even the appearance of evil, when I thought that I had friends & loved ones that were far away—I attempt to take such a course that I should not be ashamed to have you know every thing I do—And as I pass along the streets, & cast my eye in upon the crowds aroung the gambling tables in the Saloons, I turn away with sorrow & disgust—The most splendid buildings in the City are gambling houses & we could see large sums lost daily & nightly—For from Sabbath morn till Saturday night the jingling of money, & the whirl of the roulette, & the quick voice of the monte dealer, is heard—Fancy a room 40 ft by 80 beautifully proportioned, with stately columns, the walls decorated with splendid pictures, & the glare of hundreds of lights flashing upon the rich ornaments of a well furnished Bar, and your ears tingling with the sharp ringing of the gold & silver as it passes from looser to winner & you can have a faint idea of these gorgeous saloons—Tens of thousands of Dollars are placed upon the tables, & crowded around them one can see men from all climes & of all ages, from the grey headed old man to the mere youth—Frequently *the women of the town* are seen mixing in the crowd, drinking at the Bar & betting their ill gotten gains at the tables—And this can be seen at a dozen different places in this City, therefor do you wonder, that so many of the staid

Yankee race, are led away, by these great temptations—Every thing around a Calafornian, is calculated to lead the thoughtless astray, and those that come out from these temptations unscathed, will truly be one that has some principle to govern himself—With Sunday Bull-fights & daily gambling continually around us I trust that I shall still be able to walk in the path of virtue & honor—And the fact of my so freely writing to my dear wife, whom I would cause no sorrow or trouble, I am sure will set her mind easy on this subject, as it regards my course—Dont be afraid that I will so any thing that I would be unwilling to have you know—

Last Sunday & Sunday before last, I attended Divine worship—and had the pleasure on each day of hearing a good sermon—These are the first I have heard since I left Woodburn & as I attempted to join my voice on the sacred song, I cannot describe the feelings that filled my breast—Sacred scenes & pleasant times, rushed in upon my mind, but a sadness filled my heart as I thought of those who had so often mingled their voices together in songs of praise—Sadness only, that I was seperated so far from them, and I know you will believe me when I say, that my dear wife, filled a large share of my thoughts—With renewed strength, am I thus able, from the remembrance of *auld lang syne,* to persevere in that course which I think is right, & that which will not bring shame upon my loved ones—So Molly though far away from you, yet there is so many sweet ties, that bind us together, that at times I can hardly realise the great distance that separates us—thought & memory are so busy & so pleasant on this subject, that perhaps you may think I am tiresome, but these thoughts are the greatest pleasures I have, & therefore must attempt to make you understand my feelings, ever if I am tedious But it is late & I must to bed—so good night dear Mary—

12 Sept Evening—I have just had a letter from Hank dated the 8th & also seen some of our old Jersey train boys—Hank expected to come down with them, but the morning they left he obtained a job, to build a Store that will take him a month to finish—I suppose by this that he did not write, for they brought down a letter from Van for his wife, but none from Hank—Hank health has not been very good this summer but is better now—He has had a Bowel complaint, and, (see half sheet) also the chills—He is able notwithstanding to work—He writes that he

will be down, certainly by the 1st Nov & from what I learn, will likely then go home—He writes that he "should like to take a Christmas Dinner at home"—He says he has not heard from Teen since Feb, only through Van & me—I have been thus particular about Hank, supposing that it will be later news from him, than Teen will receive by this mail—

The Jersey C° boys—that is Dr Knapp & his party who are in partnership with Van, have all sold out their claims for $3.500 each & will be down in a day or two, en route for home, with about $6.000 apiece—Van had not sold when Hank wrote, but if he does sell, now, will make some $5.000 for he paid $1.000 for his claim—

This is the way, some are fortunate while others are not so lucky—It would have done me & Hank good to have been thus lucky, but I for one, am not sorry others are fortunate because I am not—If I had been thus lucky, instead of writing this letter, I should go home myself—But my turn will come before long, when I hope to leave, and hasten to you—

Nothing yet from Cousin Wm R.—I cannot hear any thing about young Loomis, but if I do will write—

My health is first rate, and my eyes almost well—The weather the past week has been cool & we have had a sprinkle of rain—The City is very healthy—We hear sad accounts of suffering on the Plains—starvation almost—But large amounts have been raised & sent to their relief—Alfred Davis said he eat his last provisions, just as they came to the first trading post—just this side the Desert on Carson River—

I am disappointed in not getting further news from Rutland for Julia wrote, that some of them would write the next month after she wrote—She said not a word about business, and I am anxious to know, if I shall owe the others, and what disposition, if any, was made of our farm—If I knew, or hear soon, it might make some difference about my stay here—But say nothing about this, that will lead others to think that I am anxious to hurry matters—But it takes so long to get answer to letters that I shall say nought to the family about this—Though they ought to write about it—

Well Molly, what do you think now, of this California business? Aint it a bad state of things that I am not able to come home—But let us keep good courage—for the time will soon come, I trust, this will not

be so—For we are not so happy as we would be if together—And I am so much a lover of home, & of my dear family that my heart aches, as I think of our seperation—And there is Tinta & Willie the dear children —I think so much of them & try to think how they look, for they must be growing to be great children—But my dear wifey I must close, and with the best love to all the friends—I am still as ever you dear & trusting husband

HENRY PAGE

Kiss the children for their Papa—
(No address on this letter, an envelope used for the first time)

Shortly after Alfred Davis went through, Horace Bisbee came into town to settle with Henry for his share in their claim and mining equipment, and while the sum turned over was not large, it was still sufficient, as Henry had hoped, to buy a horse and saddle, and to leave a small balance in cash. He was able to hunt up his friend the Express Rider, who had brought the mail to Mud Springs the winter before, and to make the preliminary arrangements for entering the business he desired to try.

The crowds in the city grew denser every day as the great immigration from the plains poured in, and every newcomer brought a tale of increasing hardship. Grass was scarce that summer, and trains were not able to make the pace set by the rush of 1849. Calculations of food based on the experience of the year before were falling far too short. Riders began to come in imploring relief for men in desperate straits. Twenty thousand were known to have taken the trail and of these Bancroft estimates that fifteen thousand started with scanty food and poor animals, depending on refitting at the Mormon settlements. This was a task of replacement entirely beyond the resources of the Salt Lake community, and by the time the riders reached Sacramento nine tenths of the emigrants were on foot and without either food or money.

The wave of horror and sympathy with which the news was heard quickly took a practical form. The miners and the government united in the work of relief. Large supplies were sent out from

Marysville, purchased with money contributed from all sections. Beef and flour was carried out and deposited at various points along the trail, and men were detailed to issue these supplies in just proportions. Stout animals were sent to carry the sick across the desert, but the well must continue to walk. The Sacramento *Transcript* of September 23, 1850, said that between five and eight thousand pounds of beef was being issued daily, but that flour had to be saved for the sick, of whom there were great numbers, since the cholera was combining with starvation to harry the unfortunate.

On the eighteenth or nineteenth of September, Tom Van Dorn reached Sacramento on his way home, and gave Henry an opportunity of sending a brief note and a gift to the dear ones at Woodburn. The note has been lost, but the present was a breastpin made of a curiously shaped nugget, possibly the very one which Henry had laid aside in his grief over Tintie's evil ways. Possibly she was allowed to wear it on days when she was good.

Tappan came close on the heels of Tom, with news that Hank's plans which would keep him in the mines a few weeks longer. Since Cousin William Rider had already passed through, there was no reason now why Henry should not set out on his new business at once.

SACRAMENTO CITY 29 SEPT 1850—

BEST OF WIVES

On the 19th [N° 22] I wrote you short letter & sent a breast pin, by Van Dorn—He left the Bay on the 25th and I suppose will be at home by the time you receive this—In that letter I was able to give you, the good news, of the safe arrival of couzin Wm M Rider—He drove his team all the way through, & his health was quite good—I was much pleased with Wm and it did us both good to have a chat together—I told him all I could about this country, and he had ten thousand questions to answer about you all—I told him I had heard too much of him from you, not to feel well acquainted with him, and when we seperated after one day's and night's interview, I could not realise that I had been talking with a stranger—We felt like old acquaintances & chatted merrilly about every thing that come uppermost—I found that he was

short of funds, but had made arrangements with his partner to have all he wanted for the present—He has gone onto Dry Creek, the first stream south of the Cosumes—

Your N° 8 came duly to hand by the last steamer, it was dated 28 July—It seems the checks for $100 came to hand just in the nick of time for you—Long enough before Fras wedding to give you all the time you might need for getting up, your *fix ups* for the occasion, and also to enable you to make your expected trip up the River; I hope you made the trip & thus enjoyed yourself—I sent the check for fear you would be out of funnds before I was able to return—

You have probably learnt ere this, if not, you can now know it, that while you have had an unusual hot summer, we here have had an unusual cool summer—In fact we have not had but little very hot weather, & consequently it has been very healthy—We have had a number of heaver showers within two weeks past & it has raised the waters on all the streams & carried away most of the Dams from the Cosumes to the Yuba—

You will see by the papers, that there is extreme suffering on the plains—On Humbolt River, the cholera, & starvation are cutting numbers down—A large effort is now being made in this city for their assistance—A large quantity of Flour was sent off yesterday and other pack trains will soon follow—We have private subscriptions papers—Some commence harangueing in the streets in their behalf & in two or three hours collect 200 or 300—The proceeds of the Theaters are given to them—In short the people of this City are doing all they can to help the sufferers & if possible get them across the mountains before the Snow—

Tell M^rs^ Long that *her* Francis is in town, is growing & healthy—His father keeps a large bathing establishment, & Francis as quite a little man about the house—

Tappan has just come in to see me, and says he has just heard from Hank—Hank will be down here in three weeks en route for home—How soon he will leave after he comes down I know not—I shall do my best to see him—In a day or two I expect to go into the country to be, gone come two weeks & I may not be back in time to write by the next Steamer—If possible I will send you a line, but I now mention it, so that if I am not able to write, you may know the reason—

I was very much disappointed again, in not hearing from Rutland & I hope if they have wrote you any particulars, that you have forwarded the same to me—The reason I am so very anxious to hear from Rutland is, so as to know what division is made of Fathers property & I think they ought to have written about it to me—

I am just as sorry to be compelled to write it, as you can be to read it, that I find I shall not be able to go home with Hank—If the Express business pays into which I am going, I may stay till Feb or March—This I know will be sad news to you, but is it not also bad for me to see all the other boys going off & I compelled to stay—I have now $150 and a horse—not enough to bring me home—And I am determined to make one more trial before I give up Cal.—When Hank leaves I shall know something what the Express will pay me—And I will tell him all & he will tell you—I have such feelings about my longer stay, that I can hardly write—and will stop for a while to calm my feelings—I dont believe you will feel worse when you read this then I now do, as I attempt to write—

I'll stop—God bless you dear Mary—

Afternoon

Dear Mary I have felt that it was heard enough for me to be compelled to stay this long away from you & the children—But when I brought my judgement to overcome feelings & felt compelled to say that I must stay in Cal. some four months longer than Hank, I could not restrain my feelings—I suppose I could go with Haunk & arrive without a dime in my pocket, and this I cannot think of doing—Without a cent to pay W^m^ H or to commence housekeeping with & to buy a team &c I am compelled to stay—What this Express business will pay, it is impossible to say, but it will do better than any thing else I can do—I trust it will pay $1000—As soon as we get started we can form some idea—My business into the country, is to go over the route make agre^t^ & go around and see the miners & get their names to get their letters from the P. O.—I shall make three or four trips per months taking letters & papers—I shall go to Hangtown, Weaver, Mud Springs & through that section—My partner gets the papers & letters out of the office—& does all the business at this end of the route—His name is Hoffman, the same man who brought us our letters last winter—He has been in the Express

business & made money, ever since then—My friend Sheldon thinks it the best thing I can do—

But the best face I can put upon the matter, it appears hard very heard for me to stay—I shall be as discontented as a fish out of water till I get away to see you—I was contented in part to stay till fall, for that I calculated upon, but when I come to say Pagey you stay till 1st Mar then I begin to feel that I am homesick—And when I think of you, why I hope as Hank will be keeping house perhaps you can stay with him—I shall say to Hank that if possible he must take you, if he goes to keeping house, till I get home, so that you may be in town—I should think if Teens health was poor you could help her, & they both ought to prefer you to Tom & Henrietta Perhaps you had better brouch to subject to Teen—

You said in your last that I was a good man, I hope you will continue to think so, for I do not willingly stay away from you—And I think you a good deal dearer & better woman & wife, than such a truant husband deserves to have—I love you with all my heart—Let Tinta and Willie know that I think often of them & hope they will be good children till papa is able to come home—

For four or five days past I have not been very well—had slight fever with chills—but broke them easily, took good portions of medicines & am now free from disease & almost as strong as ever—I tell you truth, so that you may know, why I feel so bad just at present—about staying here—Two or three days more, will make me feel as usual, for I am only lacking a little strength—It was just about such a turn, as I had just before I left home—But now I have a good appetite again, and am getting along finely—almost well again—I forgot to say that the pictures the children sent, came safe to hand, and they were looked at with pleasure, showing as they do that my dear children still think much of their papa—And may God bless the dear ones—I would give almost any thing, to give you and the children a kiss & have an hours chit chit with you—

I wish I could find some little thing to send the children but one sees nothing here of the kind, for every thing here is for grown up children—

We have reports that the cholera is at the Isthmus but the truth of which you will be able to learn from Van Dorn—

The health of this City still continues very good—

I am sure I shall be thought off at the Christmass Turkey *Doings* & though absent, I shall be with you in thought on that night—

Well I must close & remember me to all friends—Love to all the family—

A kiss for the darling ones and the whole heart for the dear wife

Your true & devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

The first duty of the new express rider was to make a round of the route to establish offices in the various communities, usually at the trader's store, and stay long enough in each place to fill out the list of those who wanted their mail brought out from the city. The road took him up the American River to the forks, and along the south fork as far as Hangtown or Placerville, then over the ridge to the north fork and back to Sacramento by Logtown, Mathenas Creek and Dead Man's Fork. It was usually a difficult scramble down into each little town and an equally hard climb out again, for mining camps were of necessity on the streams and the road as a rule was obliged to follow the higher level. But when the first toilsome round had been made, Henry found to his pleasure that, upon comparison with his partner who had made the same route the year before, the number of names he had obtained was more than double the longest list of 1849. This seemed to promise well for the winter's profits.

A letter from Mary greeted him on his return to town, a gay letter full of home news. A pious old hypocrite who had long been in need of a setback had been given a well-deserved thrashing, which served the gossips of the village with a topic of conversation when they wearied of discussing Mrs. Grinsted's party with the "tableaux," or the final route of the new railroad from Alton to Springfield. This last was an extension of an older and shorter line from Meredosia, which had been running for eight years at a speed of fifteen miles an hour and with a train three times a week. With

such service, it is hardly matter for great astonishment that it had operated at a loss or that it had finally been offered for sale. In 1847, it was bought in and the course of the line was altered to that now taken by the Chicago and Alton Road. This new route threw it some ten miles west of Woodburn and the well-used stage road, and there was considerable argument as to whether the volume of traffic it might have brought to the town would ever have been sufficient to warrant overlooking the hideous noise it made, to say nothing of the dirt and smoke. Woodburn was rather inclined to think the railroad the loser and themselves the gainers by its remote location.

Since a steamer was lying in the river ready to sail direct to sea, Henry sent a brief note by her, that no opportunity of communicating with Mary might be lost. His spirits were evidently low and the note which has not been preserved was a bit despondent, but the following day there was cause for a change of mood. California had been admitted to the Union and the town had gone mad.

The delegates who had left San Francisco in January with the newly ratified state constitution had waited months for admission. The news that California's constitution excluded slavery had been enough to rouse bitter opposition from the southern faction of Congress and certain northerners took offense at what they called the impertinence of the delegation which had accompanied the two Senators and which was clamoring for the recognition of the new state. It was not until August 13, that the Senate voted for admission, and nearly three weeks more of acrimonious debate was necessary before the House took action. Finally on September 10, 1850, the Californian Senators and Congressmen were seated.

The news was brought to San Francisco by the steamer *Oregon* on October 18, and a wild meeting of rejoicing was held in Portsmouth Square, with bonfires and processions carrying the festivities far into the night. It was less than twenty-four hours later when the word reached Sacramento:

SACRAMENTO CITY 19 OCT 1850

DEAREST WIFE

Yesterday I scratched off, in a great hurry, a few lines, & sent them by steamer "Columbus", in hopes it would reach you before the arrival of the regular mail, that leaves the 1st Nov—In that letter I acknowledge the receipt of yours mailed 19 Aug (N° 9)—

I have less anxiety about you, since I have read this letter, for you seem to be much happier, and begin to act independent,—and announce the intention of taking a course that I am convinced will add to your happiness—that of housekeeping—It will give you more work to do, & you will have no Page'y to make fires &c for you the cold mornings that will be upon you, when you recieve this—But I am glad, as long as things are, *as they are,* & as you think it will add to your happiness, that you have come to this conclusion—I am glad also to see that you are willing to go ahead, & take any course you think proper, feeling all the time, that I shall approve of your course—The truth is my dear wifey, I want you thus to feel, not but what I am pleased to have my wife look to her husband for counsel and trust to & lean upon him just as much as she always has——but as you are now situated, I think you ought thus to feel independent enough to go & do as you think best—I am sure you have confidence enough in me, to believe that I try to do rightly, & especially that I shall think what you do, just the right thing—

I am right glad to hear that Jersey Wood has been thrashed—Good enough for him—What you mention about the "Rail Road" is not sufficient to enlighten me on the subject—Is it the Rood that was surveyed to go by Capt Green's—from Alton to Springfield, or have they picked out a new route? If so, does it come any where near Woodburn?————I am perfectly astonished to hear that you have a "Theater", no you call it "Tableaux", in Woodburn—Why it must be you have not kept me informed of the progress of the place—Who is Mayor of the City this year? Would it not be best to lay out our farm in city lots, & offer them for sale? Or would it be better to wait till I get home?————Though I suppose you had a fine time at the D^{r} & I am glad to hear that you was able to go up there——Who is Mary Lyons, Kate Corbet and Mr & Mrs Ham?—I belive I shall have to come home to see what kind of

company you keep — — — Why didn't you take the children & trot off & spend the winter at the East—O I forget, you were compelled to stay at home to prepare a cage to shut up the wandering husband in, if he should chance to come home this fall—Heigho—I wish I could step into that cage, I can assure you I should not need a vigilant keeper—I think you would not be compelled to chain me with any stronger bands than those of love—But perhaps I might get kicked out of doors some of those cold nights you may have, about the time you are setting by your stove, after all else have retired and for the—not the first time—looking at these lines—For fear of this, I shant come to you my "bonnie Mary" till warmer days & nights shall again begin to approach—

You may hear about the time this come to hand, reports of the cholera in California—A few cases, & those not of a serious cast, have occured at San Francisco, but I have no fears that it will spread—This place is very healthy—And if it appears here I will let you know it—We hear reports of those going home, dying of the Cholera on the Pacific side, as well as on the Isthmus—Perhaps it is the best thing that I am compelled to stay here a little longer—And as for Gold—I dont suppose I shall have enough, to fear being robbed when I do go—

Just tell James (if you have not already done so) that it was a good piece of news for me to hear, that as long as he has concluded not to stay on the farm, that he would make no permanent arrangements about business till I came home—This all, supposing I would be home this winter—If he still thinks best & can conveniently, & without loss, I should be much pleased to have him with me, in what ever business I may go into—And if I only knew what disposition was made by Father of our farm, or if it was coming to me, I could calculate & say with certainty what I should wish to do—If I have enough to justify myself, I had rather go into some other business besides farming—or if farming should, if able, wish to sell our farm & get one of another stamp—But your health is so poor, that I dont think, that I shall try to live as we used to—I hope to make something this winter & what I may have, with the proceeds of the land if sold would give me a good start in something else—But all in the dark about Fathers Estate & about the future, I only now throw out these hints, so that you & Ja^{s} may know all you can—and thus perhaps have some little to talk about at least—We are so far

seperated that no arrangements can be made by letter—So it will have to be undecided till I return—

Evening—Having a little leisure this afternoon I wrote the above, but stopped by the shades of night, I now just at bed time will write a few more lives—You may perhaps wonder why I feel so different to-day, from yesterday when I wrote my last letter—Well I will tell you—This morn at about four oclock I awoke hearing the booming of cannon, the firing of guns, and the loud huzzas that rang through the city that "Calafornia was admitted as a State"—A steamer is just in with the mail, (though not yet open) which brings the glad news that we are once more in Uncle Sams dominiongs—You can hardly imagine the thrill of joy that pervades this country, as the news flies from place—I was thinking during my trip in the country, and seeing the extensive improvements going on, the large towns springing up in every directions, the fine buildings that are erected, that there was an uncertainty in all these things—the tenure or tittle by which the land is held has been so uncertain that it had a very bad effect upon all kinds of business—No stability or certainty in any thing—And if Congress had refused us admission at this Session, I was fearful of the results—A change must have taken place—& what that change would be, none could tell—I was fearful of anarchy & misrule—But now all this is settled,—we belong the glorious Union, and we here feel, that we are no longer aliens from our homes—Now we are Americans, entitled to all the priviledges, which Congress has so long denied us. All now is safe here—This is the general feeling & if the good people of the *Old East* States, could have know the feeling that prevails here & the wants of this country we should not have knocked so long in vain, for admission—The Bonfires, Illumination, Reports of Cannon, & the Speeches of this Evening in this City, all go to express the joy of the people—and also show the great attachment to the union—We have been heavily taxed, by the custom houses here, for every article of food—our postage is enormous—and all this without representation in the councils of the Nation—But still the people here would bear much, & have borne much, for the love of Country—And now all is settled & tranquil—The people here know the importance of the situation of this country & the influence it will & begins to exert upon the Commerce of the World, not to feel their importance—This country is to be the

grand centre of the Pacific (next sheet) commerce & will soon be in itimate connexion with China & India. Even when the gold digging is done Calafornia is bound to go ahead—Thousands are turning their attention to agriculture, & this country is bound to retain the proud station, she has so suddenly attained—

When the mail is open, I hope to get another letter from you, & will wait to finish this till I know—I have written this & shall put it in the Post Office, or leave it so that it will be sure to go in, so that you may get this by the next mail—For I may not be back to the City before the first, in time to write for the mail———I have been very successful in the Express business—but will not stop now to write you much about it. I went to the mines & got 1000 names to get letters from the Post Office—We take what letters they may receive at the P. O. & carry them up & leave them at the offices I have made—We get 1.50 for each letter & after the rainy season 2.00, we paying the Postage—besides we take up papers to sell—And do all kinds of Express business—All my expenses are paid & none of my partner's out of the receipts—After then we divide —My partner is J. T. Hoffman, an old Express man, that is for Calafornia —We call ourselves Hoffman & Page—Hoffman does the business in this City & at the Bay & I do the business in the Country—That is the reason my expenses are all first paid—when I am travelling or in the City—& his are not—And I am sure I can make more with him, than I could alone,—for it needs one here all the time—Our route will be discontinued or at least I shall leave it in the Spring as contemplated—So that you need not fear, it will detain me after that time—that is if I make any thing—Hoffman run as Express on this route last winter & had only 600 names on his list & ours now will go up to 1400 or 1500—His expenses were heavy then & he divided equal with his partner—after being on the route only after the middle of Dec & they made $700 each clear—They brought us our letters last winter—But enough of this for the present—and I'll to bed—& finish before I leave—So good night, a sweet good night to my dear wife and children May Angeles guard & protect you & me from all harm—

The following day the mail was sorted and, having no letter to read, Henry was forced to concentrate on his paper, the New York *Tribune*. The issue of September 10, 1850, carried on its first page

an account of the auction held by P. T. Barnum, manager for the "Swedish Nightingale," where the first ticket to her first concert was sold to the highest bidder and brought in $325.00. She was to sing that evening at the Castle Garden Theatre on the Battery, and by ten in the morning there was forming at the theater doors a double line of people determined to be on hand to hear her. At the rehearsal in the afternoon the reporter noted that even the orchestra was so entranced that they at times forgot to play and had to be sharply reminded of their duty by the leader. He records that in its higher runs Jenny Lind's voice was clearer than the flutes and that once it chimed in harmony with a rich toned bell of a passing boat on the river. On other pages, Henry found more and humbler evidences of fame, advertisements of an exhibition of a bust of Jenny Lind, and Jenny Lind canes for sale. But for all that he evidently read this news with faithful zeal, he probably did not overlook the item that a salute of one hundred guns had been given in honor of California's admission to the Union. The guns would find an echo in his own pride.

Oct 20th The mail is open, but no letter for me, though we have N. York papers of the 10th Sept I have just been reading an account of Jenny Linds first concert & the proceedings antecedent thereto—They are certainly music mad, though no doubt The Nightingale is worthy of all praise, both as a songstress & as a lady—

I have not heard from Couzin Wm since he went to the mines—But we hear good reports from Dry Creek, where is gone—I hope he will do well called off—good bye—

Oct 21st Was called away yesterday & must finish this & put it in the P.O. for I leave town tomorrow morning & shall not probably be back till after the mail closes———The weather is warm & pleasant,—like the last fall—My health is first rate—I am afraid Hank will slip off by the Steamer of the 1st—though I dont think it is certain he will then go, so Teen must not be disappointed if he dont then leave—and I shall not see him—But I will leave a line for him in the P.O.

Well dear Molly I must for the present again say good bye—I expect

to hear often from you—Write as usual all about the children—God bless the darlings—Tell them Papa thinks more of them, than ever, & trusts they will continue to be good children—That they will obey their Mama in all things—Not quarrel with other children—And Willie must know that Papa likes only the good & generous Willie—He dont like to hear of his being selfish—This is not doing as he would wish others to do by him—And I trust the Tinta is old enough to listen to the reasons of her Mama & it is not necessary for Papa to admonish her—Let both Willie & Tinta know that they cannot please their Papa better then to be good children—Remember God is displeased with wicked children as well as wicked folks—Always do that which you think will please, & never do that which you think your Parents would not like—God Bless you all—Love to Tinta & Willie & a kiss—And my whole heart for my wife

H. PAGE

Love to all the family & friends—

* * *

From her seat on the tavern porch, Mrs. Allard had been watching the three young women with interested eyes. They had come in by the stage road and now were walking along the south side of the square. That was her Henrietta, sure enough, with "the two Rider girls" as Mother Allard still privately called Mary Page and Cornelia Burton. They would be looking for mail. Since Henrietta had heard that Tom was starting home, Mary had been a faithful attendant at the post office when the Californian mail was due.

The older woman rose to greet the three as they mounted the steps. They were full of gay laughter. It was not often that they could spend a day together, and the walk in from the farm through the golden October weather had made them feel like girls again. They swarmed about Mother Allard as close as their billowing crinolines would permit, telling her with eager voices how Squire Meade had brought Teen down from Carlinville and had picked up Henrietta at the Van Dorn place. The Squire had business which might keep him over night, in which case Henrietta and Teen would occupy Teen's little room in the old house at the farm. Obviously they were making the most of every moment.

With a murmured apology, Mary slipped away from the others to enter the office and presently returned with her letter in her hand. They all insisted that she sit down at once and open it, for Henry's letters were known to contain much of general interest, and no one wished to delay the enjoyment of what had been already so long upon the way. They watched Mary's every movement as with heightened color and trembling fingers she tore the flap of the new-fangled envelope and drew out the sheet.

There was a pause while she read the opening lines.

"He's seen Alfred Davis and says he got through in good health," she announced. . . . "Your Henry is expected in Sacramento, Teen, so he is not far behind Tom. . . ."

Then the watching three saw the joy fade with the flush which drained from her face leaving it pinched and old. Her eyes traveled to the bottom of the first sheet, went back to the middle and reread a paragraph. Then dully she laid the letter down.

"He is not coming home," she said in a flat toneless voice.

Teen crossed quickly to her side and put her arms about her, but Mary hardly seemed to know she was there. The sympathetic exclamations of the others died into silence. After a moment Mary spoke again.

"We must be going back, I guess."

Slowly the three went down the steps and Mother Allard saw them passing again along the south side of the square, walking slowly still, as if their feet were weighted. She watched them until the sight was blurred with tears.

* * *

On the very day that Henry was reading of Jenny Lind's reception in New York, an emigrant who had come in by sea was found dying of cholera on the Sacramento levee, and the following day seven cases were reported with five deaths. Henry's work took him out on the road before the situation was generally known, but by

November fourth even the gambling resorts had been closed, the streets were deserted, and nearly all business was at a standstill. A temporary hospital was set up on L Street, but it was totally inadequate to cope with the situation, for men were constantly employed in carrying away the dead. There is no record which gives the exact number of deaths. Bancroft estimates that at least five hundred lost their lives inside the city, among them seventeen doctors, and that thousands were frightened away, for the population of Sacramento dropped in twenty days from 6000 to 2500. Uncounted numbers died on the roads outside the town, and throughout the state there must have been a loss of five thousand more, for in Hangtown alone one authority says that the mortality was seven hundred men. Then, as suddenly as it had come, the plague waned; on the fourteenth of November, Sacramento's death list had shortened from 150 in a day to 12 and in three days more it had disappeared entirely.

Meanwhile Henry and his partner had rearranged their work so that it was possible to carry on their service without going to the stricken city. Hoffman, who got all the mail from the post office in San Francisco, forwarded it by stage to a town forty miles beyond Sacramento, where Henry waited for it at the Somerset House, in what must have been Marysville. In 1850 it was already a busy place, with a number of substantial buildings to give it an established, almost urban air. As the center of trade for the northern diggings, it boasted wharves for steamers and shallow sailing craft, as well as the stage lines to Sacramento and the Bay. Freighters' wagons heading up-river to the mines with loads of provisions thronged the streets disputing the right of way with the usual traffic of the place.

Men from anywhere in the northern section might be found here, and by great good fortune Hank appeared one day on his way home, having altered his route to avoid the cholera at Sacramento. The two discussed the mysterious cessation of Mary's letters, and Hank gave what encouragement he could to the anxious man. It was evidently no inconsiderable wrench to Henry to see this closest of his former partners go:

SOMERSET HOUSE 26 NOV 1850—

MY DEAR MARY

I am writing this about forty miles from Sac. City—I am here waiting for my partner to send up the mail, for me to distribute—I expect to receive the mail to night by Stage, and hope then to get letters from you—

I left the City as I intended & distributed my letters & papers, but have not been to the City since—Soon after I left, I took a bad cold, & had considerable fever—I happened to meet with an old Ill[s] Doctor, who soon laid the fever, and, I now am in my usual health—I was of course reduced, but have regained my strength—I was not sick enough to be confined to my bed, & consequently you may know I was not very bad—

This is one reason why I have not been to the City, and as the Mail is so late, I am fearful, I shall not get to the City before the mail of 1[st] Dec closes, and therefore I write at this time & will send down, so that you may be sure to get this by this next mail—

From all we hear the Cholera has left Sac. City, and has very much abated at the Bay—I do not think you need have any fears about the Cholera prevailing to any extent in this country—

The Rainy Season has fairly come upon us, and for the past week it has poured down right merrily—Yesterday & today it is pleasant, but no doubt we will have our usual quantity of rain—

It is so long, now six weeks, since I have had a line from you that I feel much at a loss, what to fill this sheet with—You know that I feel, that I can hardly stay away from my dear family, & being so long without news from them, I feel more than usually lonesome—But if I am so lucky as to have a letter by this mail, I shall feel so much better that I think I shall be able to write something that will be worth reading—Therefore I will stop till evening & then finish—

Nov 27[th] Evening—Am very much disappointed in not receiving the mail to day, & consequently no letter from my dear Mary—But I must send this down tomorrow morning for if I wait another day am fearful this will be to late for the Mail—And feeling so much the disappointment, in the delay of the mail and consequently the non-reception of news from you, I will write, though it may be a dull letter, so that you may not thus have to wait—I know you have written, and therefore I can only feel like blaming others—You have been so good a correspondent, that I feel

confident that you have written, unless you thought it time to stop, in hopes that I may not be in Cal. to recieve them—But as you made no mention, in your last rec[d] of not writing, I hope that this is not the case —Though Hank told me, that Teen said she would not write again, for this reason—

I trust Van has arrived safely at home ere this and that Hank will escape all perils by sea & land & soon be with you in Woodburn—How great the changes that must have been, in your circle since I left—But when I recollect, that though many have been threatened only one Cherub (Theresa) has been taken away, from the large family circle, how much cause for thankfulness we have—God grant we may all be spared to meet again on this earth—

You my dear wifey, I suppose can only realise the feelings & sympathise with me, and I only with you, during our seperation—I feel that you only can begin to know what I feel at this long seperation—Especially now that the other boys have gone home, do I feel that acheing of heart, which no doubt fills your breast—But as I look forward and think that only a few more months & I will be wending my way homewards, my heart bounds with joy, and I am fain to put aside all other feelings & think only of the future—This anticipated return, is, believe me, the greatest pleasure I enjoy or expect to enjoy while here—

I feel that it is useless to tell you of the love I have for my dear wife and children, for often have they read the outpourings of my heart—It is the same old story—more than twice told—but yet I believe sweet to you & them, to know that though far away, that the husband & father thinks much & often of the dear ones, that are so far absent from him. The greatest pleasure I can expect ever to have on this earth, will be once more to meet my dear family & friends—Though I say so little about W[m] & Corinth & Ja[s] & Sarah & Teen & Fras, yet dont let them think that I forget them—No, I remember with pleasure the many pleasant hours we have spent together & love them all & think much, much of them—And I hope Father & Mother & Aunt do not think that their son & nephew has not still in remembrance, the sweet counsel he has so often had with them—With pleasure do I look back upon the many hours, I have spent with them, and often do I promise myself this treat, if ever permitted to meet them again—And often have I thought

in my wanderings, that some guardian angel was hovering near me, in answer to the many prayers they have put up to Heaven, in my behalf—I have sinned & gone astray, but the prayers of my wife and friends, have seemed, when I have tried to do right, to have aided & strengthened me—I have thought that God has thus often sustained me and enabled me to fly from evil, in answer to their prayers. This has been forcibly impressed upon my mind of late, and I trust aided me to resist temptation —I know the prayers of the righteous avail much, and in looking upon the members of your family and those of my own, have I felt that those prayers have been often answered—What a blessing we both have enjoyed, in having such Parents to guide & direct us. Those to whom we can as long as life last, look upon as the Salt of the Earth—God give us grace to train up our children in the right way, & to live in such a way, that our example will be blessed to them, and thus they be led to believe that there is a reality in that religion we profess & in that God we attempt to worship—

Let Tinta & Willie know that Papa often sends up a prayer for them, that they may love God—And happy am I in the thought, that they have a Mother who is endeavoring to lead them to the foot of the Cross—

My health is very good again, & I feel quite like myself—Give my best love to all the family but still take the largest share for the children & for yourself my dear wifey—

Your devoted husband

PAGEY

I have not a word yet from Rutland—

It would seem as if there were some difficulty in reëstablishing the express service of Hoffman and Page from Sacramento as a base once more, a difficulty which demanded the presence of the original holder of the circuit. Hoffman suggested that Henry go down to San Francisco to meet and obtain the mail, and leave him free to deal with the formalities in Sacramento. Page would have a chance to see the Bay while he waited for the steamer, and by returning with the mail he would still be in time to ride out on his usual round.

Henry, nothing loath, boarded a steamer from the new levee,

and watched with absorbed interest while the boat dropped down stream. It was the first boat he had been aboard since he had stepped off the gangplank of the *Mary* at St. Joseph on the Missouri, and he must have thought, perhaps a bit wistfully, of those eager days when everything lay ahead, when adventure colored even the very sky, and disappointment was a thing outside the bounds of imagination. Now most of his companions in travel were successful fortune hunters, "hitting the trail" for home, and their excitement was something he could appreciate but could not share. On that other boat, he too had been one of the eager crowd. He may have watched the shores until dusk, abrupt banks covered with oak and sycamore alternating with low-lying stretches where green water mingled and lost itself in the rushes and rushes imperceptibly thickened to sod.

In the morning the boat reached "New York on the Pacific," a collection of abandoned hulls dragged up on the flats between the mouths of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin to provide shelter for a motley population. An estuary was opening out like a corridor before them, opening out and narrowing again to the Strait of Carquinez between its guardian hills. They turned round the southern shoulder, and an arm of the great Bay was before them. Henry had an impression of hills covered with their winter green, rising there toward the west to rugged shapes, of deep indentations running far inland to north and south, of islands, of the increasing lift and tug of the ocean swell under the steamer's keel as they headed toward the ragged town cowering in the shelter of what they said was Telegraph Hill, a promontory which dropped to the narrow strip of water leading out between highlands to the freedom and measureless space of the Pacific. In the wordless exhilaration that filled him, was there any conscious sense of touching the unforeseen goal of his forebears' striving?

The city was taking on detail as he looked. Some one familiar with the town pointed out the signal station on Telegraph Hill and described the code of flags by which the town was notified when the mailship was at hand. From the station untidy shacks

crept helter-skelter down the slope, "Sydney Town" said the San Franciscan, the gathering place of escaped convicts from England's penal colony in Australia, a dangerous community left much to its own devices. South of this first eminence, the city stretched away, clinging to the side-hills till it reached what Bancroft called "a flapping camplike suburb" among the sand dunes beyond Pine Street, where patches of chapparal, sagebrush and scrub oak mingled with the crazy temporary structures. The shipping in the foreground was like a forest of masts and spars, some of it merely at anchor and some abandoned more than a year before, still idle and serving ignominious uses for storage or lodging. Henry noted one with a familiar New England name on her stern, *Niantic*.

His first business was to find the office of Gregory's Express and report his presence. He was then free to roam the town until the mail should arrive. He located the post office on Clay and Pike Streets, a wooden building set broadside to the road with a porch across the front, and a door on each thoroughfare. Only a few loafers leaned against the posts which supported the porch roof, but Gregory had told him it would be a different story when the coming of the mail was announced. He found Portsmouth Square, the gathering place of the town, and stared at the porch and dormers of the Parker House, famous as a hostelry and a gambling place. And he undoubtedly noticed in a corner of the City Hotel a shop called "The Pioneer Book Store" and may have wished he had more time to loiter there. He saw the new Episcopal church on a height dominating the town and harbor, and some one told him that the small building, only eighteen feet by fifty and with a roof of cloth, had cost ten thousand dollars to build. This explained to him why so many people were content to live in canvas shelters or the merest shanties. He picked his way across gigantic mudholes in the streets on bales of merchandise that had been thrown in at some time when several ships arriving simultaneously had glutted the market. He saw cookstoves, coffee, tobacco, and even flour used thus as stepping-stones.

The crowds were such as Sacramento had made familiar, miners, gamblers, Indians, traders, Orientals, Spanish Californians, and more miners and gamblers, a bit more feverish and frenzied in their rushing to and fro, with perhaps a deeper impress of the ocean, a novel addition of sailors and shipmasters to mark the seaport town. He shouldered through them with eyes rendered unseeing by long use.

The day before the mail was due the lines began to form at the post office. Two swung out from the main front door and another stretched away from the side entrance. The wise man chose his place and then hired a small boy to hold it for him that he might be free from the tedium of waiting hour after hour. The mail for Gregory's was carried over to the Express Office in bags and there sorted, a process which took several days, and gave Henry the opportunity to hunt up his friends, among them the Mr. Waller who had married his lost sister Frances, and to start his long letter home:

SAN FRANCISCO 9 DEC 1850.

MY DEAR WIFE

You may well be surprised at the date of this, but you must remember that I now have no fixed place of abode, and am flitting about from place to place, wherever our business calls me—My partner who generally does the business here, thought I could attend to it, & thus enable him to expedite matters at Sacramento—therefore I willingly came down hoping to see something new, and perhaps meet some of my old acquaintances—viz R H Waller & E. B. Goddard—I have not yet met them, but shall likely find them tomorrow—The mail which left New York the last of Oct. arrived last night & on the evening of the 11th I shall return to Sacramento—Then & there I hope to find letters from you, for I have not had a line from you for the last three mails—

I had Gregory overhaul the letters for S. that have just arrived & he found one for me from Mother & Julia dated 20th Oct, & acknowledging the reciept of mine, of the 29th Aug—recd that day—They give me all the news about the old town & all about the family—That Egbert has gone west,—that the Dr may soon go—But they say not one word about business affairs—& I know not & fear shall not know, till I arrive at home, what disposition Father made of his property—The *only* reason I have

any anxiety on this subject is, the condition of our Farm—The title, you know is in Father, & he has advanced me considerable, & I know not whether, I shall have to sell the Farm—or whether it will come to me—I should think J^no^ B., or George, would have attended to this & sent me a statement of affairs—but it seems that *poor* Henry is not much thought off, not enough to be informed about business, that every one knows, must some day, come upon the carpet—I feel greived & hurt about this matter, for if things are as sometimes I hope the are, I might have hastened my return, but not knowing, but that I was indebted to the Estate, I could not now come—Not one single word about any kind of business in the Rutland letter, excepting that Mother has sold the farm—You cant think how this has troubled me, & to you alone can, will or shall I ever say a word about it—at least as long as I stay in Cal—Therefore you will I hope keep this all to yourself my dear Molly, for I so felt, that I must speak out to some one—and it seems I have no one desirous of letting me know any thing but you, therefore to you alone could I speak—

Mother writes that you expect to meet me in New York & that she expects us therefore at Rutland—I dont care where I meet you, but you must let me know where that will be—For to you & to my dear children shall I hasten, whether in Ill or Vt—And if you have any choice, you must make up your mind, not to be altered after you write the answer to this—For if you can get an answer to this to New York by the steamer of middle of Jan^y^ (& perhaps it might answer by the Steamer of 1^st^ Feb) I shall likely receive it and shall be governed accordingly—But though I leave you to do as you think best, yet I hope you will remember, that if nothing but a visit is to be had at Rutland, that I may be short of funds—I should delight much to see my dear Mother again, but I have a family to support—and dont know that I can afford the trip—If you do decide to go East, dont wait for me in New York, but go direct to Rutland—for I might hunt a week for you in N Y & not find you—But I rather think from all I know & all I can guess that I shall find you in Woodburn—If such should be the case, you must also mention it—For such a thing might happen if I find you in R. that we should stop there longer than you imagine—For I might be too poor to get away—If you do go East, have W^m^ rent the farm for another year—But I fancy that when I return to Sacramento, I shall find letters from

& thy may say something about this—At any rate I dont intend, finishing this till I go up—

I must write to Mother by this mail & for fear I should be very busy, I have commenced this now, so as to have a longer chat with you, and here goes—I was much pleased with an incident that happened on my last trip in the mines. So much so that after I left the ravine, I made the hills resound with my haw-haws—Its too good to keep, so you must have it—I met a M^r^ Hays of Bellville, I belive a son of old Mr Hays of said town—He inquired where I was from & I of course said Woodburn—Then do you know the young man that was clerk in the Bank &c he now lives in Woodburn—He had a HANDSOME sister? I asked, do you mean W^m^ H Rider? He said yes & now I remember his sister was called Mary—I told him I was somewhat acquainted with the family—having married one of his sisters—What—did you marry that tall one? No—there are four of the girls married—my wife's name is Mary—Now aint this fine, to think I had to come this far, even to Cal. to find out another of your Beaux—Oh Molly, Molly you never told me about this one—But never mind I shall find you out one of these years—perhaps—I suppose his heart went pit-a-pat, as he said with a sigh "he had a *handsome* sister"—I could hardly keep my countenance as I bounded onto my Indian Poney & put spurs to him to get out of hearing so that I could burst forth in a good haw! haw!! haw!!! I fancied I could see you *tipping* around the streets of Bellville hanging onto the arm of this tall "hombre" a pair of sighing & cooing mortals—And here in one of the lone gulches of this land of Gold to meet that sighing swain, saying to the husband "he had a handsome sister"—Hurra for our side—

And now I suppose you'll go & read all this nonsense to your sisters, & then they trump up some tale about some love sick fellow & you'll have a time of it—Well I dont care—go ahead—but just keep in mind one thing *Mrs* Mary A Page, that I dont intend to stay in Cal, much longer, and for all these things, you will have to render an account to your *Lord* & Husband,—thats me—Now go ahead if you dare—And just remember one thing, if you did skylark & fool others, that you caught a Tartar at last,—went clear through the woods & then put up, with that poor crooked thing, upon which you now lean——Good; thats frequently the end of "handsome Sisters"—they get just such fellows for

husbands as Miss Mary A Rider did—Perhaps you dont remember her? Dont remember I suppose what happened on a certain evening, say the 30 June 1842—when that said Miss promised all sorts of things to have a *Mrs* put before her name & Page tacked on to the end of it—Well, Well what creatures you women are—By the way did you attend the Womans Convention? neither that in Ohio, nor in Mass—Well I do declare—perhaps you still want your husband to return—Oh dear—

The jesting anecdote brought up for Mary the ghosts of the group of young men who had made life tolerable for her and Sarah in that first hard year in Woodburn, after their father's failure, when their only recreation was the trip to Edwardsville where William was working. Mr. Hays—perhaps she let the letter sink to her lap, while she gazed with half smiling eyes through the walls of her present day room to the forgotten triumphs of her girlhood.

The chance to read the newspapers regularly had given Henry the opportunity to keep up with the movements of the day back in the "Old States" and he had not failed to note the hilarious discussions of the Women's Rights Convention which had been held in Worcester on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of October. This meeting had been the outgrowth of an earlier gathering in Salem, Ohio, the previous April, when a group of women, unthinkably foolish or amazingly plucky, according to the angle of the spectator, met in the Second Baptist Church, read letters from Mrs. Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone, then leaders in the propaganda for "the emancipation of women," and drew up a memorial to be sent to the Constitutional Convention. An address to the women of Ohio was prepared, and eight thousand signatures were obtained for the petition to the Convention. A wave of merriment swept the nation. Though a few people here and there were shocked enough to shake their heads, not many took the matter seriously until the delegates convened at Worcester, Massachusetts, and it was found that nine states were represented. A careful program had been arranged largely by the president, Mrs. Davis, assisted by Lucy Stone. The speakers included men and women, Wendell Phillips and William

Lloyd Garrison, consorting on this occasion with Lucy Stone. Whittier, Alcott and Emerson sent letters to be read. This sort of thing could not be easily laughed away, nor could the action of the convention in forming a national committee to organize annual gatherings in various cities be entirely ignored. Good natured jibing by degrees was changing to a more acrid ridicule, but still the material for jokes which the situation afforded seemed endless to men like Henry Page with gentle clinging wives.

Sheet No. 2

Well, wifey I have got onto another sheet, this evening, and to begin with, just stop reading this letter, & read the enclosed slip, I cut, from a paper of this City, today—and then perhaps you will know something of the feelings we Californians have, once in a while———

Enclosure from letter of December 9, 1850

DAILY PACIFIC NEWS.

Monday Morning, Dec. 9, 1850.

Pen-Knife Sketches.—No. 5.
By an Old Block.

The Mountain Express.—Who is that man descending the hill towards the Bar, on that jaded mule? He does not look exactly like a miner, and yet his soiled clothes, broad-brimmed hat, and beard of two weeks growth, makes him look as if he was neither a greenhorn nor a trader, Look at him. His blankets are spread across his saddle, and under them are a large pair of saddle-bags, which are puffed out too much to contain bags of gold, while the self-possession with which he urges his weary mule over the broken rocks, along the precipitous hill-side, proves him to be familiar with riding on the dangerous mountain passes. Why, that is the *Express man,* on his return from San Francisco, Sacramento and Marysville, with letters and newspapers for the mines. At nearly every bar where there is a store, a letter memorandum is kept by some

merchant, where the miners who desire to obtain their letters from the Post-Office in the Valley, can enter their names, and at stated periods, generally monthly, their names are taken by the Express, who makes it his business to get from the Post-Office all letters and papers directed to his subscribers, and deliver them to the individuals at their diggings. For this he receives a compensation of from one to two dollars on all letters brought up, and generally fifty cents for all letters mailed.

There is scarcely a gulch which he does not visit; there is not a bar, however difficult of access, that he does not find his way to, and day after day he climbs and descends the mountain heights, regardless of hunger and thirst, sleeping on the ground at night, with the howling of wolves for his lullaby, when no friendly tent affords a shelter; scattering joyful news to the isolated miner in his solitude, or perchance he is the bearer of evil tidings to some less fortunate one.

But with what heartfelt solicitude is he expected! Without him, the miner would be shut out from the world, and next to the trader, who furnishes the means of sustaining life, the Express man is of the most importance. His approach is sometimes heralded by a wandering miner, when the news spreads along the banks and bars for miles. The Express will be here in three days, in two days, to-morrow. Little else is thought of. "Hope he will bring a letter for me—and me—and me, too," goes from mouth to mouth, and then follows the oft repeated tale, "I havn't had a letter from home in — months." "Ill give five dollars for one." "Yes, ten, to get one."

The Express has arrived! Every pick and shovel is dropped, every pan is laid aside, every rocker is stopped with its half-washed dirt, every claim is deserted, and they crowd around the store, with eager enquiries, "have you got a letter for me?" With what joy it is seized, and they care little whether they pay two or five dollars for it, *they've got a letter.*" Or perhaps, as is often the case, the answer is, "there's nothing for you," and with a "damn the luck," and a heavy heart, they go sullenly back to work, unfitted by disappointment for social intercourse the rest of the day.

Say; just look at that rough-looking customer, out on one side, leaning against a tree, with his back toward us, let us get around where we can see his face. Why! he has got a letter, and — — — the tears are streaming

down his rough cheek, till they wet his long beard. Are they tears of joy or sorrow? See his bosom heave as he passes the back of his hard hand hastily across his eyes. Is it from painful emotion? "Ah, John, you've got a letter———have you good news? Are all well?" "Yes, yes, good news———all well———*thank God;*" and he is too full to say more. Let us respect his feelings, and leave him to read alone, and give his long pent up emotions full scope. Home and friends are before him; the rest of the world is all a blank.

Home and friends! Have you ever been for months isolated from the world in the wild solitudes of the mountains? And have you left behind a wife and children, dearer to you than life itself, a father and mother, brother or sister; or is there a bright-eyed darling whose affections are all your own, and who silently offers daily and nightly prayers for your success, your welfare, and speedy return? Oh, how your heart yearns towards them, how your very soul strives to burst its fetters to embrace them, how the tears swell in your eye, as they do in mine at this very moment, when they are thus presented to your mind, with the sad thought that months of toil, of doubtful success, of danger, perhaps, and gloomy isolation, must pass, even if life is spared, before you can clasp them to your bosom. And when you have opened the flood-gate of feeling, and poured out the full tide of love in glowing words upon a letter sheet, with a heart felt and oft-repeated "God bless you," depicting your ill or good fortune, your hopes and prospects, do you not look upon the Express man not only as a convenience, but a benefactor? Ah! you do, and next to your own success, you pray for his. I have been there, I know it, and have felt it all, and when with a trembling hand, I have opened the missile of love, and looked upon the well-known hand, and read and re-read, again and again. Oh, I have felt—(hold up, old penknife, you've got me to crying, and I haven't got the ghost of a pocket handkerchief.)

———Well you have read the piece I suppose. That man had been in the mines & felt just what he wrote—I know it—tho' I dont know "An old Block" from an old Brick, for one could not write such things—so true—so life like, if he had not experienced the feelings of him who says "I ll give five Dolls for one" "Yes ten to get one" or had not felt as that "rough looking customer—leaning against the tree," he never could have

wrote that piece—And that answer "all well—*thank God*" only could have been penned by a Californian Miner—Ask Hank if this aint all true —I have felt it all, & never did I read any thing so well & truly written— Just stop dear wife & read that last paragrap again, & then you'll know how I have & still do feel—Do you wonder now that sometimes I write such *solemcolly* letters—But I must "hold up" like "old pen knife" even if I've got a pocket handkerchief—So good night & *God bless you*

San Fran, 10 Dec—I have just finished a letter to Mother & before I go to bed will add a few lines to my dear wife's letter—Tomorrow will decide whether I shall be able to return to Sac City in time to get your letters & answer them by this mail—If I have to stop here much longer, I will be disappointed in reading your letters before I close this—You will still address to Sac. City—I wrote to Mother that I knew not of your determination about going East, but knowing I should hear about it, if you did go—& that it depended entirely upon your whereabouts, whether I should land in N. Y. or N. O. for I should first hasten to my wife & children—But since writing yesterday I have thought about what you wrote about keeping house & purchasing a Stove &c and have pretty much made up my mind that I should find you in Ill[s] & not in V[t]— Am I mistaken? If so inform me—I have written such a letter to Rutland, that I think they will answer it immediately so that I can get the answer in Cal—So if your answer to this dont reach me, theirs may, & thus I shall know what to do—Dont I repeat stop in N York for me, but go on to Rutland—If you go, get every thing you want, for yourself & children, for of course you wont go without them—But enough of this, for it is writing all in the dark & about what I consider, the more I think of it a very doubtful supposition—

To day I have been to call upon Mr & Mrs Waller—You know W. first wife, was my sister Frances—They seemed *right* glad to see me & I am sure I was to see them—They are pleasantly situated—I have not yet found M[r] Goddard—But shall succeed I think tomorrow———— What do you think I have for a table to write upon? Why I have pulled the head board out of my crick bed stead & laid it on the bed & here I set, stooping over it—This will account for all the variety of handwriting these two sheets are filled with.

Business is dull here & at Sac. compared with what it was last year—

We have evey symptom of a *dry* winter—Bad times for the Miners in the dry diggins—Tell Hank I have sold our old Cabin—But could get only $25= for it—Tell him Dead Mans Fork is as dry as a bone at the cabin & down below old Franks diggins—Some little water in Mathenas Creek—None in Log Town—

All are anxiously waiting for water, to wash their dirt—

Have not heard the first word from your Couzin W^m^ Rider—But we hear first rate reports from Dry Creek—through Braden and others—Have not heard from Pica or Tap, or any of the Jersey boys since Hank left—Adieu for to night—Sweet Dreams & may Angels watch around my dear family—Good bye—The cross lines, scratched out, on the other sheet, I wrote thinking I had hold of Mothers letter, instead of yours—

(cross lines)

Please write what decision my wife has come to, about having me come to V^t^ or Ill^a^ for fear her letters may not reach me—That is if you know ought about the matter—

Henry had not mentioned the cholera in San Francisco and it is to be hoped that Mary was not curious enough to look on the reverse side of the clipping he sent her* where a list of the deaths by this disease were given. It might have caused her some misgivings as to her husband's safety which would not be allayed by scanning the fragments of news which included a decidedly cool account of a murder, and a most casual reference to horse thieves and danger on the roads.

The day following the penning of the last section of this letter, Henry found that the mail sorting was complete and he was able to catch the steamer for the twenty-four hour journey to Sacramento with the mailbags and his unfinished message to his wife.

Sac. City 12 Dec—I arrived here this morning, and was doubly disappointed in not getting a letter from you—What can be the cause, I cannot imagine—Unless you have thought I had started for home & therefore it was useless to write—But perhaps you are only paying me off, for my trip to the mountains, last spring when I was not able to

* Reverse side of clipping is given in full in Appendix D.

write—But as I suppose Van has arrived by this time, perhaps in two or three months I may get a letter from you—And I think you hardly deserve a line from me, here you more than the usual amount—

By the way I found a letter here from Cousin William dated 24 Nov—He is in Woods Diggins, near the Stanislas River—in the southern Mines—He says the mines he is in, are rich & he hopes to be paid for his labors this winter—Is comfortably fixed for the winter & has his stock of provisions laid in—His health is very good & wishes me to write him about the *late* news I have from Ill[s]—What lots, I shall be able to send him—

I am fearful My Dear Molly that you have been very remiss in one duty, at least I dont believe you have read the 25[th] verse of 25[th] Chapt of Proverbs of late—But no—I cant blame you—for perhaps you have written—and O the sad thought, which I dare not dwell upon, perhaps you are or have been sick or the children have been sick—When shall I be relieved from this great anxiety I feel—If it would bring news from you, willingly would I undergo any privation or fatigue—But alas —I can only hope for the best & have patience to wait—

I shall leave town in a day or two to take my usual trip—My health is very good and I try to be contented—

Enclosed is a letter sheet, very popular just now in Cal—It shows very well the state of affairs here—At least it may please the dear children & still not be without interest to the ollder friends—Best love to them all—Kiss the dear Children Tinta & Willie for their Papa—And with the best of Love from your ever

Devoted Husband

HENRY PAGE

See last verse of 3[d] Epistle of John—

(But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.)

Prov. 25:25—As cold waters to a thirty soul, so is good news from a far country.

He had to wait for another mail to go and come before the long-desired letter from Mary relieved his anxiety. He learned then that his delay in returning had changed her plans, for she could not think of keeping house alone through a winter without a man in the

family to do the heavy "chores." She was still at the farm with William and evidently finding it almost unbearably lonely, for Frances was married and gone, and Sarah and Teen were in Carlinville, separated from her by fifteen miles of bottomless roads. The days must be dragging leadenly for Mary, he thought, though hardly more slowly than they moved for him. He was glad to think that Hank was home, for the two had figured in their last talk together that he ought to reach Woodburn for Christmas. In this they had underestimated the time needed, for it was actually New Year's Day when Hank walked in on his family. The Burtons always celebrated New Year's Day with a family dinner thereafter:

SACRAMENTO CITY 29 DEC 1850.

MY DEAR MARY

This is the Sabbath, and it is one of the lovely days, of this our very pleasant winter—And to me, it has been one of those days long to be remembered—I was awoke this morn by the news boys crying papers in the Streets—and though I soon found out the mail had not arrived, yet one Steamer had arrived from Panama, & I hastened to Gregorys Express Office, and found a letter from you N° 10 of 27 Oct—And with eager trembling, did I tear open the enveolope, and cast my eyes upon the well known writing, to see why it was that I had so long been without a line from you—And all my anxiety was put to rest, on finding that it was not sickness of yourself or the children, but the thought that I was wending my way homeward, had only hindered you from writing—This was as I had hoped, but was more fearful that some other & more serious cause had hindered you from writing—And I can heartily join in the exclamation, which you find in the scrap I sent you "All well Thank God"—This long anxious waiting for news, from loved ones, so far away, is one of the most corroding cares that trouble me—When I recieve your letters regularly, my mind is more at ease, and trusting that the kind providence of God is still over you, I am as happy, as a poor home sick body can well be—until about the time for another mail —Thus I meausure my time by the half month, and slowly do they pass away—

I this day attended Church, and as always the case after such an event, I am as homesick as can well be imagined—

I suppose that before you receive this, you will have learnt from my letters as well as from Van & Hank, the reason I concluded to remain here through the winter—Therefore I do not suppose it necessary again to repeat it—But as you seem anxious to know what I may be doing—I will try to enlighten you—When I first came down here I deposited for safe keeping with S. K & A the little money I had—Soon after they failed and made an assignment of their effects, for the benefit of thier creditors —Of course I have not had the use of that—and in fact had hardly sufficient to take me home—I could not therefore go home as I expected and wished—and had to look around for winters employment—Determined all the time not to go into any thing, that would keep me here late in the spring—But as I have formerly written, so now I cannot say when I shall be able to leave—I trust not later than the 1st April will find me here—But as soon as I can certainly decide I will let you know— Be assured of one thing that I shall not stay longer than necessary—I suppose I may not be able to determine till three or four weeks before I shall leave—The fare on the Steamers is 250$ in 1st Cabin & 200$ in 2^{d} Cabin to Panama, and very many are going home now on Sail Vessels —They make very quick trips and charge only 50$ to 75$ in the Cabin— The accomodations on the Sail Vessels is better than on the Steamers, and they are generally only about fifteen days longer—I have not decided which way I shall go—

I suppose I can partially realise your disappointment, upon learning that I was to be absent a few months longer—I think your letter a good index of your feelings, and it was with very sad feelings that I found you took it so hard, that I was compelled to remain here—Though it is a sad state of things yet I hope you will be able to hold up, a short time longer, and not grieve so much as I fear you have—You know me too well to even think I would stay longer than necessary, and if I had the money on hand, at the time Hank left, I dont think I could have been kept here—

I am not able to say what I shall have when I leave here, but am still going on with the Express Business, and shall make something in the business—If I have more than enough to take me home, you then will

have a chance to see what I may have left—I think it wont take you long to count it——By the way I am sorry I said anything in my last, about your going East, for I conclude you will stay at Woodburn—There I shall expect to find you

You left me in the dark somewhat as it regards your ill health; but I trust rest & quiet will soon restore you—You must brush up all you can, for I hope to find you in good health next spring—Espicially on your own account, do I hope your health will improve for you have suffered much since I left you—I was very much in hopes, that your health would have become quite good once more,—for I thought rest, which you would have, would help you much——Your situation this winter is truly unpleasant, shut up as you are at the farm,—not able to walk much,—the girls in town,—Fras married—and Corinth confined with her babe—But I hope that you have had a pleasanter time, than you imagined you would have, for from the conversation I had with Hank, who knows something about somethings, that he would do some what to make the time pass more pleasanter for you—Hank is a good fellow, & knows what an unpleasant time it has been, for you all, when your husbands were away—You have not had those you were accustomed to go to, and consult with, and lean upon—And you espicially my dear wifey, have been made to feel the absence of your husband—Your health has been poor—the children have confined you at home—You have not had the advantages of visiting you were wont to have—I have thought of all these things, and hope things will be different now—This has troubled me much, and I think I have been able to realise your circumstances—Therefore dont think that I have not felt for you, and think how my heart has ached, because I could not be with you—I have felt very uneasy & restless all this winter—partially because I had no news from you, and because I had to stay in this country—

As you come near the close of your sheet, you seem to cheer up, and write somewhat more like yourself—And if my letters have been as regularly received, as they have been sent, I trust you have been able to keep your good cheer—And dont be afraid that I shall say a word if I find you mounted on your high horse—I dont think you have any occasion to think I would be displeased with any thing you have written—Far from it, for I think, even if this letter is "sad" or "blue" as you call it, that

there is enough of the cheerful, to lead me to think, that at times, you are a *little* happy—I hope you will have *many* happy days this winter—

You may tell James if he is waiting for me to return, that I shall be on hand for almost any kind of business, and you & he, had better hatch up something ready for my consideration by the time I arrive, or I may be tempted to take you from Woodburn—I have thought that as it was so uncertain that I should be home in time for spring work, that W^m^ had better rent the farm—So if he will look around a little for me, and rent the farm, I will be obliged—I hardly think, (though of couse I leave this for future consultation) that it will be best for us to go onto our farm—Your health is poor & I had rather try something else—I should not think strange, if I should, after I return conclude to sell our farm—For if I do farm, I want a different farm from ours—

Monday 30^th^ The mail Steamer Panama has not yet arrived, and I was fortunate to receive yours by Express—I am waiting for the mail—but shall be in town to write you by the next Steamer—At least I think I will—

I suppose Hank is at home by this time, and you have had a jolly time these Christmas holidays—Perhaps it would interest you to know, how I am situated &c—I board at the New England House on I Street—My Partner & self have a pleasant room, where we do our writing &c—This is a quiet place, with good accomodations—clean beds &c &c—Mr & Mrs Torry keep the house, & we have a lady boarder—Thus you see I have a chance to rub off some of the rust, & brush up my manners a little, so that when I return—you will not expect to find me such a rough customer, as we Californians generally are—I find it very pleasant here, and though there are more things to remind me of home, in this quiet place, than at some other houses—I find that I am more happy—but what is all this compared with what I might enjoy if at home—Bitter thoughts frequently arise, but I try to be reconciled—

Tell Hank I have just heard from Braden & Co—They are washing out their dirt on Dry Creek—it does not yield so well, as they expected—But still it pays—

There is nothing of interest to communicate by way of news. Our winter is very different from last winter—With but little rain—and warm pleasant weather—like May days of Ill—The roads are yet very good &

the streams low—This City is very dull—though there are many in town —Provisions of all kinds cheap—

I am glad to hear you are able to send the children to School—I trust they think once in a while about their papa—My best love is theirs—God bless the darlings—And may His kind blessing still be upon you, my dear Mary, and that we may soon meet & greet one another face to face is the prayer of

Your devoted husband

HENRY PAGE

My health is good—very good—

Kind love to all the family—& respects to friends

Goodbye

CHAPTER XIII

Debit and Credit

JUST after the turn of the year, Henry sat in his little room in the boarding-house in I Street, an open letter in his hand. News had come at last from Rutland, and he knew now the terms of his father's will. He sat motionless, his eyes dimmed by tears of which he was not ashamed. His father had not failed him. His father had never failed him. He looked again at the letter and it almost seemed as if William's hand were laid upon his shoulder. Whatever of strain and uncertainty there had been, the added months of separation for him and Mary had been no part of his father's plan. If he had only been told of this will in those first letters from Julia and his mother, he might have gone home with Hank and Tom. Over the wound inflicted by the thoughtless disregard that had seemed to rate him of little consequence was laid the healing of his father's justice. He shared equally with the others.

To each of his twelve living children William had assigned ten thousand dollars. For each one he had kept a careful accounting. Suddenly Henry could see the busy man at the desk among the books in the Rutland library, explaining "debit" and "credit" to a boy about to go away to school. And here they were again, "credit" and "debit" for each child—credit, ten thousand, debit, the dowries for the girls, the financial starting of the boys. In Henry's case the debit column was long, with his education at Middlebury, the expense of his first journey to Illinois, the unpaid balance of the loan which had set up the store in Woodburn, and the purchase of the farm, but the credit was still appreciable.

With the folded letter clasped between his hands, Henry considered the situation. He owned the farm free and clear, he could pay

all the debts, and he had enough to start once more in whatever line appealed to him and to Mary. There was no reason now why he should not start for home, as soon as his share of the Express business could be closed. He must find a rider to take his place carrying the mail to the mines. This should be an easy task in a city thronging with men. He must make one more round on the old route to show the new man the details of the distribution. And then, whether he should take steamer or sailing vessel would depend on the amount of his share in the earnings of the dissolving partnership of Hoffman and Page. In any case, the letter he had written to Mary on the twenty-ninth of December, 1850, would probably be the last he need write from California. He would travel to the States with the first mail of 1851.

* * *

Panama, strange and dreamlike. The ancient Spanish city was the oldest settlement by any Europeans on the American continent, once a foothold and supply base for the conquistadors, and still a great shipping point for trade with South America. It presented a panorama of gray ruins being slowly crushed by the exotic weight of the encroaching jungle, of dignified buildings on narrow streets sheltering slow-moving, soft-spoken descendants of the Spanish soldiers and the raiders of the sea. Against this background was a flaunting American community growing out of the gold rush that had built tents and shacks on the beach, hotels with flaring signs in English, and had even established a newspaper, *The Panama Star*. There was fever and sickness everywhere, and a mad struggle to get out, one stream contending for passage on the steamers to California, the other competing for the favor of the native boatmen who poled bongos, or dugout canoes, up the Rio Grande on the first lap of the homeward trail.

Where the head of canoe navigation on the little stream was reached, an old foot-trail, with worn paving thrust knee deep into the earth by the passing of countless feet, led to Cruces on the upper

reaches of the Chagres. Along this stretch strange shelters awaited the traveler. Hank Burton, who had traveled this way months before, was telling the folk in Woodburn of coming one night to an unkempt round hut kept by a one-eyed Englishman of a villainous cast of countenance. He accosted the party of miners as they approached and suggested that they lodge in his hut instead of wasting time and strength in putting up a shelter of their own. They could have it all to themselves, for his own quarters were separate. He showed them a dusky interior hung with hammocks. Time was an all important consideration and the miners fell in with his proposal. He brought a light and stood about as if waiting for something. It might have been the loneliness of isolation longing for the companionship of its own kind, or it might have been a shrewd watchfulness hoping to detect a gold-belt or heavy wallet as his guests undressed. Suddenly he became insistent that one of them go out and fire a gun.

"I see you are armed," he said. "There are plenty of thieves along the trail, and if you give them warning that you are prepared they will leave you unmolested."

He won his way, for his evil face was a powerful argument, and the miners feared to rouse his suspicions; but they wondered if they might not be sounding some signal agreed upon between confederates. When at last he left them, Hank turned to his hammock and found on the strings where his head would lie a sinister dark brown stain. Something had trickled down that hammock, spreading as it flowed. The miners held a council and determined to stand alternate watches through the night, two armed and on guard, while two should sleep. The plan was adopted, but nothing disturbed the quiet of the house, save some night creature with an unbelievably loud voice that called and called outside their hut, and was answered from the depths of the jungle. They wondered if it could be an animal after all, just as they always wondered whether their watchfulness had saved their lives or merely destroyed what might have been a good night's rest.

At Cruces, for Henry Page as for Hank Burton before him, there

was another mad contest for canoes, and then a drifting down the river to the sea. At the Chagres' mouth he waited for a steamer bound for New York, since he had received word that Mary would meet him in Vermont.

For weeks the steamer plowed its way at a pace that must have seemed snail-like to the impatient man, through seas that at first were of an unbelievable tropic blue. There were flying fish to watch by day, and the strange tricks of the phosphorescence at night, while life, so long a matter of rush and worry, slowed down to the pace of the muffled engine throb and the measured hiss of the waves alongside. There was plenty of time to think of the past and to dream of the future.

His mind dwelt on his childhood home where Mary would be waiting, the overarching trees of Rutland's green, the softly curving outlines of the surrounding hills, gentler, more intimate, to him, more haunting in their beauty than the great majestic ridges he had so lately crossed. He was glad to be going back to gather strength from the security of long-established ways. The long brooding lines of the white house under the sycamore tree seemed etched against the sea. In dreams he opened the door and was enfolded by the peace of the rooms within. The shade of his father at the desk in the library, the ghost of Frances sewing in her little rocking-chair were as real and as dear as the mother and Julia who would meet him there. These others would be changed, Julia a woman grown, even the baby Fanny, named for the lost Frances, would be a big girl now.

There were days when all his thoughts were of Mary—the girl that he had first seen moving among the tables in the schoolhouse, the bride with sweet serious face singing in the Woodburn choir, the woman with pain-shadowed eyes in the kitchen at the farm, the wife sitting on Tom's little trunk in the wagon, alternately crushing her handkerchief and smoothing it out again, with tears on her lashes, telling him she loved him. And as he thought, he vowed that whatever the future might bring, the darkness of misunderstanding

should never come between them again, a vow which he lived to keep inviolate.

The steamer was leaving the tropic sea behind and facing into the gray grimness of the north Atlantic. The sullen waste of water under low-hanging clouds, harried by rain-squalls and the winds of early Spring, was the same as when it lifted the lurching, clumsy form of the *Jewel* which bore John Page in 1630 to his land of dreams, unchanging since it had carried James Harris and little Elizabeth in a white-winged packet ship. For them it had been the threshold, the pathway of adventure, as the boundless green waste of the prairies had been to Henry. Perhaps he thought of this as he faced the wind-streaked sea, or it may have been that all his dream was of home, the children and Mary's face.

Appendix A

An echo of the situation is to be found in a letter from John Rogers quoted in Savage's notes to the Governor's Journal. John Page had evidently written to his old pastor, giving a detailed description of the plight of the colonists. This letter, which had been taken to England by Winthrop's son when he returned to lead the relief expedition, drew from the Dean of the Puritans a reply addressed to "John Winthrop, Jun. at Bristol, or in his absence to Mr. Pelham of Buers," which read as follows:

"Good Mr. Winthrop,—I hope you have my letters with certain moneys that I sent to you to intreat you, of all love, to provide some little matter of butter & meal for such as I named, wherein I earnestly entreat your loving faithfulness and care to procure it and direct it to them, to Jeffery Ruggles, late of Sudbury, he is the chief. But this day I have rec^{d} so lamentable a letter from one John Page, late of Dedham, that hath his wife and two (sic) children there, and he certifies me, that unless God stir up some friends to send him provision he is like to starve. Now I pity the man much, and have sent you twenty shillings, entreating you, for God's sake, to provide such a barrel of meal as this money will reach unto, and direct it over to John Page with this my letter enclosed. In which I pray God move your heart to be very careful, for it stands upon their lives; and it cuts me to the heart to hear that any of our neighbours should be like to famish. If we could possibly help to prevent it, I should be glad. So ceasing to trouble you farther, I commend you and that weighty business you are about to the blessing of Almighty God, who speed it happily.

I sent a letter to your Father, which was directed to Mr. Harwood. I beseech you to be a help to the safe sending of it.

Your Worship's in the Lord,

JOHN ROGERS

Good Mr. Pelham,—If, in Mr. Winthrop's absence, this letter should come to your hand, I beseech you, good Sir, that you would be so good as to fulfull the contents of it. I shall be much thankful unto you."

Jeffery Ruggles, so the Journal states, died before the relief returned from England, but John Page must have received the barrel of meal with the kindly letter enclosed.

Appendix B.

E. I. *Bowman* Journal of events from Illinois to Ca[lifornia.]

March

22nd Left Home in the after noon and we[nt] as far as Jerseyville

23rd Left Jerseyville and pursued on our Journey as far as Eldrid two miles west of Carrollton where we encamped for the night

24th Left and went as far as the Illinois river at the Columbian Ferry at this place we overtook the Jerseyville Boys awaiting to be ferryed across the River

25th Lay at the above place this day as we could not get ferried across on this Day

26th We final succeeded in crossing & encamped on the bank for the night

27th in starting from this place we were so unfortunate as to upset our waggon after reloading we left & went 4 miles & encamped for the night

28th this day we traveled over a very rough & barren Contry about 16 miles

29th our route on this day was through a rich bottom land in the vicinity of Atlas & Rockport. The road was most excellent

30th This was the longest Days drive we h[ave] yet went, being over twenty mil[es]

31st Proceeded on and crossed the Mis[sissippi] River & encamped 1 mile from [Hanni]ble for the night

Sunday morning

Aprile

1st We lay bie on this Da[y] I went to the Presby[terian church] wrote [ ]

Apl [2]nd We left on this day & proceeded as far as 15 miles in the interior

3rd This was a rainy day Consequently we were compelled to bie

Aprile (*Continued*)

4th also lay bie on this day it rained all night The Davis boys overhawled us at this place

5th on this day we proceeded on our Journey about 18 miles the roads was very bad indeed I drove myself & was very much fatigued

6th This day was stormy & the road bad so we did not leave

7th Still laying bie David Pease overtook us this evening

8th rained very hard all night The streams are impassible therefore we could not proceed on

9th Lay bie this day also

10th Still laying bie though the day is very fine prospect of leaving in the morning

11th Got underway once more ferried Salt river near the town of Clinton & arrived at the town of Paris in the evening where we encamped for the night wrote to Smith

[12]th Left this morning and went as far as the town of Madison rained in the [af]ternoon & road muddy

[13th P]roceeded on; the road muddyer than [ever]

[14th tod]ay we proceed[d] on to within 1 [mile] of Huntsville and encamped

Sunday

15 proceed[d] on our Journey Stop[d] sometime in Huntsville encamped on the fork of Charatan River for the night

16th we also traveled on this day crossed the Charatan bottom 1 mile in lenght which was the worse road I ever say in my life Drove myself this day

17th it Snowed quite hard for awhile this morning went on as far as the mouth of Grand river & encamped

18th crossed the river this morning & went 15 miles in the contry before camping Snowed also.

19th only drove 4 miles this Day camped at Carrollton The day is very pleasant

20th Lay bie this day the day is the pleasantes we have had for the last two weeks

21[st] Left & proceeded on our journey through a prairie contry 21 miles The day was clear but windy & dusty

Aprile (*Continued*)

22nd Lay bie it being Sunday The day is fine went a fishing but with poor Success only caught one fish amoungst the whole of us. held camp meeting in the evening.

23rd This day we traveled 16 miles over a fine contry. passed the town of Richmond rained in morning Swam our oxens over Crooked River and hawled out waggons over the bridge by hand Danced a cotillion in t[he] evening

24th this day we traveled about 19 miles through a highly cultivated country which upon an Everage was the best farming land I ever Saw it being high & Roland as well as dry.

25th went about 16 miles over a very rough road Saw some very beautiful prairie pass through the town of Plattsburgh the weather continues fine

26th went about 15 miles Hank Goodrich & Co met us on the road

27th Arrived at St Joesph

28th Lay at the above place & very buisey in getting our provision packed

29th Still layin at the above place buisey as can be in getting ready to leave

30th Lay bie also

May

1st move Down to the ferry & Encamped.

2nd Lay at the ferry crowded So that we could not cross rained in the night

3th Crossed The Missouri River about 11 O Clock in the Evening & encamped

4th Struck our tent & proceeded about 6 miles through a bottom untill we came to the ridge & encamped.

5th Left in the afternoon & went only about 3 miles before camping it rained the night previous & the road was bad.

6th Lay Idle this day

Appendix C

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE GREEN AND JERSEY COUNTY COMPANY.

Previous to the adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws, the following Resolution was unanimously agreed to, and signed by every member:

Resolved, That we the subscribers, members of the "GREEN AND JERSEY COUNTY COMPANY of emigrants to California, now rendezvoused at St. Joseph; in view of the long and difficult journey before us, are satisfied that our own interests require for the purpose of safety, convenience, good feeling, and what is of the utmost importance, the prevention of unnecessary delay, the adoption of strict rules and regulations to govern us during our passage: and we do by our signatures to this resolution, pledge ourselves each to the other, that we will abide by all the rules and regulations that may be made by a vote of a majority of the company, for its regulations during our passage; that we will manfully assist and uphold any authorized officer in his exertions to strictly enforce all such rules and regulations as may be made. And further, in case any members of the company, by loss of oxen or mules, by breaking of wagon, robbery by the Indians, or in fact from any cause whatever beyond their control, are deprived of the ability to proceed with the company in the usual manner, we pledge ourselves never to desert them, but from our own resources and means to support and assist them to get through to Sutter's Fort, and in fact, we pledge ourselves to stand by each other, under any justifiable circumstance to the death.

Constitution of the Green and Jersey County Company

We the members of the Green and Jersey County Company of Emigrants to California, for the purpose of effectually protecting our persons

and property, and as the best means of ensuring an expeditions and easy journey, do ordain and establish the following Constitution:

Art. 1. The officers of the company shall consist of a Captain one assistant Captain, a Treasurer, Secretary and such other minor officers, as may be provided for by law.

Art. 2. The Captain and assistant Captain, shall be elected by ballot, for the term of twenty days, and until others are chosen.

Art. 3. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected in the same manner, for the term of four months, and on charge of neglect of duty may be removed at any time, by a vote of two-thirds of the company.

Art. 4. The Captain shall preside at the meetings of the company, may call meetings of the company when deemed necessary, and shall do so at all times when requested by six members. He shall—under the advice of the Guide—have the entire command of the company, in all matters relating to the time and order of marching and encamping, and whenever any obstacle whatever, to our progress and welfare occur, may require the aid of any or all of the members. He shall have discretionary authority, to inflict penalties upon members for disobedience of his orders or those of his Assistant: provided, such penalties shall consist only of extra or additional guard, and other duties to which they are liable.

Art. 5. The duties of the assistant Captain, shall be to execute the commands of the Captain, and to supply his place in case of absence.

Art. 6. The duties of the Treasurer shall be, to take charge of, and safely keep all moneys belonging to the Company, subject to the duty of reporting the state of the treasury, whenever called on by a vote of the Campany.

Art. 7. The duties of the Secretary shall be to keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings, and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law.

Art. 8. This Constitution may be abolished or amended, at any time, by a vote of two-thirds of the Company.

By-Laws of the Green and Jersey County Company.

We, citizens and inhabitants of the United States, and members of the Green and Jersey County Company of Emigrants to California; about

starting on a journey through a territory where the laws of our common country do not extend their protection, deem it necessary, for the preservation of our rights, to establish certain wholesome rules and regulations. We, therefore, having first organized a constitution of government, for ourselves, do now proceed to enact and ordain the following Laws; and in so doing, we disclaim all desire or intention of violating or treating with disrespect, the laws of our country.

Sec. 1. In case any complaints made to the Captain, by any member of the company, that any of the rules or regulations have been violated, or that any of the company have violated the laws of order, right and justice, which are evident to all men, it shall be his duty at the first camping place, to call a meeting of the company, and state to them the complaint that has been made, when, if the company decide, by a vote of a majority, that the offence is of that character—deserving punishment, they shall proceed to the trial of the person complained of, in the following manner. The names of all the company except the parties, the witnesses, and the mess-mates of the party complained of, shall be placed in a box, and five drawn promiscuously therefrom, which five persons shall constitute a jury to try the case. The witnesses, shall be examined under oath, by a person appointed by the Captain, and after a full and fair hearing, the jury shall decide the case by a majority, the jurors to be sworn to do justice between the two parties.

Any person feeling himself agrieved by the decision of a jury, shall have the right of appeal to the whole company, but it shall require a vote of two-thirds of the whole company to set aside the verdict of a jury, and such vote shall be taken by ballot.

When any offence is comitted, requiring punishment, and a punishment is not named for such offence, in our By-Laws, it shall be the duty of the jury, in such case, to name in their verdict what the punishment shall be, and how and when inflicted.

§2. In case any member alleges to the Captain, that he believes his life, or those of his comrades, to be in danger from any other member, or complains that any member has drawn any deadly weapon on another, except in self-defence, or has threatened the life of another, it shall be the duty of the Captain to bring such person, complained of, to trial in the same manner, as is provided in section first of these By-Laws, and if

the jury shall unanimously decide that it is unsafe that he shall continue with us, he shall be expelled.

§3. Expulsion from the company, is defined to mean, and shall be enforced as follows, viz: the expelled person shall be supplied, from the mess to which he belongs with provisions sufficient to carry him to the nearest settlement, and then warned to leave the encampment within one hour, and if, after the expiration thereof, at any time during the journey the person thus expelled, shall be found within the encampment or persists in holding communication with members of the company, the taking of his life by any member shall be deemed to be in self-defence.

§4. Any member of the company taking the life of another, shall be tried for the offence by a jury of twelve, selected in the manner and form as prescribed in the selection of a jury for the trial of minor offences, and six unqualified challenges shall be allowed on both sides, and as many more as good reason can be shown for; they shall then proceed with the trial in the manner aforesaid, but their verdict must be unanimous, and from it there shall be no appeal. If the jury cannot agree, a new jury shall be empannelled from the balance of the company, and second trial be had, and so on, to a third jury, when, if the third jury cannot agree, it shall be considered as an acquittal. But if found guilty of wilful murder, a file of twelve men shall be selected, by lot, under the direction of the Captain to execute the penalty of death on the convicted person.

§5. The Captain shall preside at all trials for offences, or violations of the laws of the company, and the Secretary shall make a record of the proceedings and result of the same.

§6. All gambling, for money or property, by members of the company with each other, is expressly forbidden, and shall be deemed an offence, for which the parties shall be tried, and on conviction, shall be required to do guard duty, one day for the first offence, two days for the second, three days for the third, four days for the fourth, and in the same ratio for each additional offence.

§7. At all times when practicable and safe to the company, each and every Sabbath day shall be observed as a day of rest to man and beast.

§8. A corps of twelve men shall be detailed by the Captain, to be termed the Pioneer Corps, who may be ordered in advance of the train, at any or all times when deemed necessary by the Captain, for the pur-

pose of repairing roads, building bridges or doing any other work necessary to facilitate the progress of the train. Such corps shall be formed by taking one only at a time from any mess, and no member shall be required to perform said duty the second time, until all others, except the Captain and his assistant, have done the same.

§9. The Captain and his assistant shall be exempt from guard duty.

§10. The wagons shall be numbered from one upwards and divided into messes of four each and in changing from front to rear, three daily, to enable the messes to always travel together, the whole four shall change. Each mess of four wagons may, if they choose, elect a Chief, with power to command their order of travel, and perform any other duties not inconsistent with the rules and regulations of the company.

§11. The guard shall be organised and constituted as follows: the assistant Captain shall procure from the Secretary, a list of all members—each mess by itself—from this list he shall make up his guard roll, in such a manner as to require but one from any one mess to be on guard at the same time. The next man on the roll, after detailing the guard of each day, shall be the officers of the guard, whose duty it shall be to attend to relieving the guard during the night, and also to report, to the Captain the name of any guard who shall neglect his duty. The assistant Captain shall notify the officer of the guard of his duty, and shall furnish him with a list of the guard for the night, at least twelve hours previous to the time he enters on duty.—The guard shall consist of nine men, forming three reliefs, whose duty during the day, shall be to guard the cattle, mules and horses, prevent their straying, and drive them into camp at night, at which time the first relief shall enter on the night watch, to be followed by the other two, at such times as will most equitably divide the duties to be prescribed by the Assistant Captain. The guard of each day shall enter on their duties on the rising of the sun, and continue for twenty-four hours.

§12. No member of this company shall be allowed to carry, in a wagon, a gun or pistol, loaded and caped or primed.

§13. In the event of the decease of any member of this company, on the rout to, or in California, the property of said member shall be duly preserved, and if on the route shall be taken to our point of destination, and unless otherwise provided for by the said deceased person, and after

due notice shall be given, said property shall be exposed to public sale, and sold to the highest bidder for cash, and the proceeds shall be paid, first to the nearest relation of the said deceased, and by him remitted to his legal heirs; and if said deceased has no relation in said company, then said proceeds of sale shall be paid over to such persons as the company may designate, and by them accounted for as aforesaid provided; and for the faithful performance of said trust, they shall enter into bonds, payable to the relations of the deceased.

ELON ELDRED,

A. R. KNAPP,

Committee to report Constitution, &c.

Appendix D

Enclosure from Letter 24
(clipping)

THE PACIFIC NEWS

is published every morning,
(Sundays excepted,)

BY WINCHESTER, SKILLMAN & CO.,
Montgomery street, between Washington and
Jackson streets, over Payne's Auction Store.

TERMS—INVARIABY IN ADVANCE.

For One Year, per Mail	$25 00
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Legal Advertisements, not paid in advance, will be charged the former rates.

☞ Job Printing of every description executed in a superior manner, at the Office of the PACIFIC NEWS.

Enclosure from letter of December 9, 1850
Reverse Side

absolutely disgraceful is, that they have deserted their high constitutional standard, deliberately. During the interval before assembling, Mr. Granger addressed a letter to WASHINGTON HUNT, the Syracuse nominee, asking his views on the late action of Congreses. Mr. Hunt responded very frankly. He sustained the "higher law" doctrines of Mr. Seward, advocated a repeal of the fugitive slave law, and avowed, moreover, that he had seen and approved of the Syracuse Resolutions, before they had been introduced to the Convention. All honest politicians at once concluded that, after this, the fanatical portion of the Whigs would be left alone.

You may imagine how shockingly they have been disappointed. Frank and his set have succumbered with fear and trembling, and have pledged themselves to support the very measures against which, but a fortnight before, they had issued their solemn protest. All this indecision and versatility argue ill for the whigs of New York at the next elec— — —

horse stealing, and whom they were bringing to this city. As the journey could have been performed in a single day, and a week has already passed, great fears are entertained by their friends lest some mishap has befallen them. The presumption is that the prisoner was leagued with a band of horse thieves who have fallen upon the two gentlemen named, and that they have been killed, as they were both bold and determined men, and would not yield the prisoner unless overpowered.
(Transcript.

The *Transcript* speaks of the cold weather Thursday morning, thus:

"The ice on the different pools in our streets was sufficient to sustain a man, and we saw several hombres engaged in delightful sports of a somewhat slippery nature. Snow had fallen to the depth of several inches at Nevada, and the storm had not abated on Monday, when our informant left. The snow will not remain long, though it blights the prospects of the miners somewhat."

Rencontre.—We understand that a rencontre took place at Volcano Diggings, last week, between a man named Scruggs, and another named James Rhodes. Rhodes made some remark which incensed Scruggs, who turned and struck him. A gentlemen present laid hold of Scruggs, and had him in custody, when Rhodes drew and fired, the ball striking Scruggs in the arms, between the elbow and wrist. The gentleman relaxed his hold, when Scruggs drew a knife and stabbed Rhodes in the left breast, and on his retreating inflicted another blow in his back. The wounds proved mortal. The deceased has been in this country about four years, and had a ranch at Grass Valley. Having married a squaw, he seemed to favor the Indians more than the whites, and the miners in that section of the country were strongly prejudiced against him. The deceased was formerly from Ohio, but had left his parents at an early age. (Transcript.

Died.

In this city, on the 6th inst, of cholera, Capt. JOHN A. PATTERSON, of New York, aged 45 years.

On board the Gen. Warren, on her passage from Panama to Acapulco—

WILLARD BARTON, of Medway, Mass.
WESTERLY CASTLEBURY, of Georgia.
BARNABAS CARAY, Medway, Mass.
Mrs. TEBBETTS, of New York.
B. F. BABCOCK, died at San Diego and was buried there.

In Stockton, on the 5th inst, at the house of Messrs Read, Taylor & Co.

Mr. JAMES LETCHER, of Lexington, Va.

At Leake Spring, Sept. 25th, of diarrhoea, JOHN G. GOODMAN, Sr, aged 73, of Fort Bend Co, Texas.

On the Mokelumne, Nov. 25th, of congestive fever, HIRAM GOODMAN, aged 37, of the same place.

New Orleans and Texas papers please copy.

At Panama, Sept. 28. of Cholera, after a few hours illness, Mr Ebenezer H. Watson, formerly of New York, aged 45 years.

Dec. 7 Wm. Smith.
" " Wm. Hays, Illinois, 52
" " Thos. H. Wells. Iowa. 48, dysentery.
" " James Lennie, Scotland, 26, cholera.
" " Alfred Tame, 13 mos.
" " Jean Jaquiel, France, 38, dysentery.
" " Geo. B. Penfield, New York, 37, cholera.
" " Mathilda Wilson, England, 39
" " Thos. Ash. Conn., 23, cholera.
" " Geo. Plumeridge, New Zealand, 35, cholera.

MARINE NEWS.

CLEARED.

DECEMBER 7.

Ship Marathon, Waterman, Calcutta.
Ship Alexander, Long, Sandwich Islands.
Ship Lowell, Coffin, Mazatlan.
anish Bark Gounier, Krabb, Valparaiso.
ark Joseph Butler, Gardner, Pacific Ports.
ark Lydia Ann, Bullion, Sandwich Islands.
Bark Frederick Warren, Matton, Hong Kong.
Bark Equator, Wier, Callao.
Tchr Santiago, Flowers, Sandwich Islands.

ARRIVED.

Steamer General Warren, Smith, 210 ds fm New York, to J. H. Titcomb.
Brig Coquette, Grey, 62 days from Valparaiso, to Vives, Schultz & Co.

SPOKEN.

By the Gen Warren, off point Conception, brig Malek Adhel, fm San Diego for this port.
Aug 27, lat 33 30. long 48, ship Great Britain, from New York, for this port, with foremast sprung.

Oct 21, ship Hindostan, fm N York, for this port.
Oct 16, lat 39 10, long 66, ship Florida, fm N York, for this port.
Oct 7. lat 39 30. Long 64. bark E Corning, fm New York for this port.

MEMORANDA

The Gen Warren left at San Diego, Dec 5th, Brig Orleans, bark Hortensia, and schr Josephine. The steamer Eudora was waiting a supply of coal.

The schr Josephine made the passage from this port to San Diego in 67 hours.

Panama, Nov. 4—Arr schr Roe, Phimmer, fm San Francisco; 6th, brig John Petty, Catchell, do; 7th, Fr bark Odilie, Lecomiat, fm Realejo and Punta Arevas.

PASSENGERS.

per Steamship Carolina—H P Hepburn, R W Norris, G Gibson, R George, M A Corea,
John Spear, jr, Mr Stevens, G S Goodman, W S Armstrong, W F Taylor, Mr Ezekiel and lady, W Renny, jr, J H Robert, Mr Harris, Capt H N Page and servant, Mr Midget, mail agent, S Parrot, G Perroni, F Goliado, J Caniff, Dennis Cunnis, W Thompson, S Fuller, G Fuller, N Newman, F White, J D Lockwood, J Ennis, J Simmons, S H Wiley, W A Gober and servant, W A Bennet, A F Bennett, A Dolling, G W Boone, W S Williams,
E B Comstock, J Ketteredge, G D Goodkin, W Armstrong, D W Alleot, H E Gober, J J H Breedlock died Oct. 30, and R Aking Nov 6

Per Gen Warren—J Haynes, J Cook, M P Yanny, John Enos, J Ball, J H Tebbets, Miss E Asevedo, Capt Rich, J Kingsbury, C B Bridghard, J S Greenwood, J W Williams, S C Mackum, T J Harrison, J Power, B Aldrich, J Kingsbury, M Thomas, F Laluk, C H Seals, O M Sellers, Benj Joiner, J Nelson, H Willis, J Wiley.

PASSENGERS SAILED.

In ship Ionian, from Boston, Oct. 19, for San Francisco, Messrs. Wm. F. Ashton, Robt. Parkinson, Benj. Church, Frank Wescott, Joseph Davis, Benj. Akerman, Thomas Martin,—Fogerty, John Cowick, Martin Scy-

fant, John Rice, George Rice, Anton Rice, Wm Chrystal, Timothy Murphy, mostly of Lowell and vicinity.

In schr. Celia, from Boston, Oct 10, for Sacramento City—Richard Vance, John Curtis, Geo. W. Norris, Allen Heald, Jonas Mussey, Josiah Keen, Samuel Burrill, Artemas Philbrook, J. P. Jones, Aurilla Jones, Cyrus Hunter, all of Maine.

CONSIGNEES.

Per Gen Warren—J Hahn, P Tullet, Kelsey, Smith & Risley, B C Judson, T LeFevere, J J Chaviteau, H Burnett, L Cohen, J Stearns.

IMPORTATIONS.

Per Gen Warren—42 bales, 35 trunks, 53 cases.

VESSELS SAILED FOR CALIFORNIA.

Oct. 9.	Brig Long Island, Robinson,	Salem.
10.	Ship Florida, Nickerson	New York.
	Ship Prospero, Cushman	Boston.
	Bark Jas. W. Page, Bearse	do
	Schr. Osceola, Clark,	do
11	Ship Mazatlan, Drummond	Phila.
	Schr. Sican, (Peruv.) McFarland,	New York
12	Ship Ionian, Ranlett,	Boston
14	Stm. Columbia, Totten	New York
15	Brig Oriental, Robinson	do
	Brig Potomac, Smith,	Portland
16	Schr. John Castner, Somers,	New York
17	Ship Ozark, Bartlett,	do
	Ship Exchange, Gunderson,	do
18	Ship Versailles, Knowles,	Boston
	Ship Hindustan, Cushing,	New York
	Schr. Susan, Shamway,	do
19	Brig Dracut, Lincoln,	Boston
20	Bark Hermitage, Forrest,	Baltimore
23	Bark Hazard, Barstow,	New York
24	Schr. Enterprise, Boyd,	do

BUSINESS NOTICES.

☞ Notice.—All merchandise and baggage now on board the ship TAHMAROO, on storage, if not removed previous to the 10th of January, will then be sold to pay freight, storage or other expenses.

A. W. RICHARDSON,
Master and Agent.

d61m*

☞ THANKSGIVING SERMON.—Extra copies of the *Pacific News* of Tuesday, Dec. 3, containing the eloquent discourse of Rev. Dr. Farley, may be had at the desk of this office. d5tf

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☞ MESSRS. HAMILTON AND LONGLEY, of "Our House" in Washington street, a few doors above Montgomery, tender their thanks to the public, for the patronage hitherto received, and hope, by diligence in procuring the best variety in the market, and by attention and low terms, to receive a continuance of the same. d41w*

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INDEX

Albany, N. Y., eastern terminus of Erie Canal, 20.
Allard, Innkeeper, 28; Postmaster, 95.
Mother Allard, kindness of, 289; knows Mary, 30; mentioned, 303.
Alton, Ill. in 1849, 90.
Alton Company of Emigrants, chooses river route to St. Joseph, 90; camped across river at St. Jo, 102; splitting up, 162; disorganized, 164.
Ambrose, in Winthrops fleet, collides with Jewel, 7.
American Falls, on Snake River, 175.
American Fur Company, 121, 126; built Fort Laramie, 149.
Atlas, Ill., 100, Appendix B.
Lewellen Ansall, scout sent ahead of train to California, 176.
Arbella, Winthrop's flagship, 7.
Dad Armstrong, hunter, 27.
Ash Hollow, Neb., 140.
John Jacob Astor, 121.

Bannock River in Idaho, 174.
Bear River in Wyoming & Idaho, 162; described 165, 166.
Bear River Valley in California, 192.
Edward Beecher, friend of Riders, 45.
General Bellows, 11.
Bellows Falls Canal, construction of 12-13; completed by flood, 13.
Bidwell, Sutter's overseer, 197.
Big Blue River, mentioned by Henry, 124; crossed, 127.
Big Nemahah River, 121; Henry writes from, 122; crossed, 124.
Big Sandy Creek in Nebraska, 128; in Wyoming, 160.
Horace Bisbee, 277; settles for mining equipment, 291.
Bitter Water River, Wyo., 150.
Black Swamp in Indiana, 36.
A. M. Blackburn, 173.
Gershorn Blake of Woodburn, 164.
Bloomington train loses cattle, 128.
Joe Borem mends wagon, 112; helps set tires, 143; breaks all his wagon bows, 151-152.
E. M. Bowers elected Asst. Capt., 121; kills buffalo, 136.
E. L. Bowman's Journal summarized, 110; in full, Appendix B.
Jim Bowman, 127; guards cattle in storm, 142; finds lost oxen, 177.
Boyd of Monticello, 140.
Braden, friend of Hank Burton, 319; mining on Dry Creek, 324.
Sam Brannan, Sutter's storekeeper, 199.
Bryant, author of "What I Saw in California," 128.
Dr. Budden, of Woodburn, 288; pulls a tooth, 232; success in mines, 232.
George Budden, 232.
Buffum of Alton, 164.
Buffalo, N. Y., Canal fare from Albany, 20; western terminus of Canal, 22; steamer fare to Detroit, 22.
Bunker Hill, Illinois, 26.
Hank Burton, lives at tavern, 28; brings first fine boots to Macoupin Co., 26; joins match hunt, 30; visits Rider farm, 58; builds pulpit for church, 59; plays clarinet, 59; joins musical evenings at Riders', 63; marries Cornelia Rider, 67; makes plough-handles, 71; daughter born, 75; tells Henry of gold discovery, 75; enters partnership with Henry & Van Dorn, 80; starts for California, 84-85; precedes party to St. Louis, 90; goods shipped in his name, 98; with Van arrives first in St. Jo, 100; joins Jerseyville Co., 114; kills antelope, 140; with Van shortens wagon, 148; hunts lost oxen, 156; shoots grouse on Bear River, Ida., 166; gets salmon-trout on Humboldt, 179; builds quicksilver machine, 249; leaves partnership, 255; sells wagon & cattle, 265; health poor, 289; builds store, 289; starting home, 293; sail from Marysville, 305; adventure on Isthmus, 328; arrives in Woodburn, 321.
Jim Burton, brother of Hank, 28; on match hunt, 30; builds pulpit for church, 59; mails letter for Mary, 104.

California, before gold rush, 194-195; San Diego and trade in hides, 195; Spanish rancheros, 196; news of gold reaches San Francisco, 200; general character of country, 205-206; demand for mint, 212;

type of winter, 211, 225; healthful climate, 218; struggle between Americans & foreigners, 219; "northern & southern mines" terms explained, 219; condition of roads, 246; organization for statehood, 247; Constitutional Convention, 248; counties set up, 248; typical summer, 274; admission to Union, 297, 300-301; cholera in, 299; commercial future of, 301; drouth of 1850-51, 319.
California trail, 175-193; from Snake to Humboldt, 175-180; junction with cutoff from Soda Springs, 176; ruts still visible, 178; junction with road from Salt Lake, 176; Mormon cutoff on Humboldt, 179; junction with road to Feather River, 183; first news direct from California, 184; short rations, 189.
Carrollton, Ill., John Rider's choice for settlement, 32; description in 1823, 42; first Baptist church organized, 46; visited by cholera, 46-47; passed by Bowman, 100, Appendix B.
Carrollton, Mo., 111, Appendix B.
Castle Sand Bluffs, 141.
Cave-In-Rock pirates of Mississippi, 39-40.
Characteristics of miners, first emigration, 214-215, 220; type of social intercourse, 230-231; general success, 231; Sunday observance, 223, 253; increasing recklessness, 261; begin to go home, 287; devotion to Old States, 301.
Charitan River, Mo., 111, Appendix B.
Chicago, in 1837, 23; collapse of land boom, 23.
Chimney Rock Passed, 142; description, 146-147.
Cholera epidemic of 1849-50, on steamboat Bay State, 99; on the Missouri, 100-101; in St. Jo, 108; on the trail, 116-117; in St. Louis, 171, 211; in New York, 171; in Alton, Ill., 211; in Woodburn, 215; in California, 299, 3-4-306; on Humboldt, 293; on Isthmus, 295.
Mr. Clark, schoolmaster, 71.
Clinton, Mo., 110, Appendix B.
Clinton County wagons join Jerseyville Co., 112; withdraw again, 120.
Columbian Ferry on Illinois River, 110, Appendix B.
Conestoga wagon recommended for emigrants, 76; description of, 81; arrangement inside, 83.
Consumnes River, gold in, 276; bar described, 277.
Cost, of semester at Middlebury College in 1837, 19; of tavern service in Illinois, 25; of board at Woodburn tavern, 26; of provisions, at Illinoistown, Cal., 193; at Mud Springs, 219; of food & clothing in Sacramento flood, 227; of papers, 230; of potatoes, 254.
Courthouse Rock passed, 141; description, 146.
Crabb & Chapman join Company, 112; have sick ox, 141; rejoin train, 143; overturn wagon, 143-144; rejoin train, 160; take successful cutoff, 176; overtaken by train, 182; try Feather River cutoff, 183; break wagon tire, 191.
Crooked River, Mo., Appendix B.

Alfred B. Davis, blacksmith, 27; makes ploughs, 71; arrives in Cal., 287.
Old Man Davis, hunter, 27.
Deer Creek, Wyoming, 151.
Detroit, Mich., steamer fare from Buffalo, 22; terminus of Western Stage Co., 22.
Corinth Dewey, wife of William Rider, 60; brings piano, 60; starts musical evenings, 63; takes care of Tintie, 74; donates butter, 83; cooks for cholera patients, 215; Henry's messages to, 213, 224, 233, 307.
Harriet Dewey, 89; mentioned by Henry, 93.
George Dodge, chore boy, 71; wages paid with first gold, 228.
Donner Party organized, 69-70; interested Henry, 69; its tragic fate, 73-74; camp seen by Argonauts, 189-190.
Double Creek, Ida., 166.
"Dry Drive" in Wyoming, 160; described by Henry, 164.
Dr. Dorsey's Company from New Jersey, 133-134.

Early reports of gold, Baptiste Ruelle on American River, 199; Mexicans on Bear River, 199.
Dr. Edwards of Edwardsville, friend in need, 50; advises purchase of farm, 53.
Eldred, Ill., Appendix B.
Ellet brothers, 28; Alfred, 28; Charles builds first suspension bridge at Niagara, 28; Ed, doctor, friend of Henry, 28; mentioned, 255.
Emigrant Company, organization before departure, 76-77; on road, 119; Constitution & By Laws summarized, 117-119; in full, Appendix C.
Emigrant Gap where wagons were let down by ropes, 192.
Emigration of 1849, numbers in, estimated at St. Louis, 93; estimated at Independence, 99; estimated at St. Jo, 99; estimate of total by Oregon Trail, 107; actual total by trail, 117; figures at Ft.

Kearney, 130; figures at Scotts Bluffs, 143, 147; estimated at Ft. Laramie, 158; estimated at Bear River, 164; teams going from Salt Lake, 177; total estimated by land & sea, 219.
Emigration of 1850, 238; arriving in Sacramento, 287; suffering of, 290; relief measures for, 291-292; cholera among, 293.
Equinox House, Manchester, Vt., 20.
Erie Canal, Albany eastern terminus of, 20; fare to Buffalo, 20; express packets of, 20-22; Buffalo western terminus of, 22.
Evansville, Ind., 39; stage road to St. Louis, 40-41.

Fare, Buffalo to Albany on Erie Canal, 22; Buffalo to Detroit by steamer, 22; on ferry at Green River, Wyo., 161; San Francisco to Panama by steam and sail, 322.
Fall Creek, Ida., 175.
Flatboat travel, 37; boatmen, 37; building boats, 37-38; loading, 38; navigating Wabash, 38-39; dangers from pirates, 38.
Fort Bridger, traders from, 154; main Oregon Trail passed, 160; road to Salt Lake passed, 176.
Fort Childs, see Fort Kearney.
Fort Hall, location of 145; first seen, 168; Hudson's Bay Company post, 168; description, 168.
Fort Harrison, 36.
Fort Kearney, how named, 98; rifle regiments going to, 128; description, 128; mail station, 130.
Fort Laramie, built by American Fur Company, 149; taken over by U. S., 98; reached, 145; mail station, 145; description, 149; Francis Parkman at, 149.
Fort Leavenworth, 98.
Fort Massac, Ill., 39.
Fourth of July celebrated in Woodburn, 1841, 59; on trail, 159-160.
Fremont's Journal, guidebook, 69; used by Dr. Knapp, 77.

Benjamin Gattan, 170; sent as scout to Cal. ahead of train, 176.
William Gattan, Asst. Captain, 135.
Genesee Turnpike in New York, 35.
E. B. Goddard in San Francisco, 311.
H. Goodrich meets Henry, 106; meets E. I. Bowman, App. B; starts home, 111 & 114.
Samuel Goodrich, see Silas Goodrich.
Silas Goodrich, miscalled Samuel, 114; miscalled Charles, 124; chosen scout to precede train to Cal., 170; but did not go, 176.
Goose Creek in Nevada, 177; gold reported there, 177.
John Gragg, neighbor, 71; interest in Cal., 82; Henry writes to, 215, 217.
Grand Island, Neb., 129.
Grand River, Mo., 111, App. B.
Greaser hunts antelope, 126; kills hare, 134; kills antelope, 139, 140; kills antelope & goose, 153; catches trout, 161.
Great Emigration of 1630, numbers of, 6; departure of, 6-7; advance guard of, 7; sickness of, 8.
Green River, 160; ferry rates, 161; registration of wagons, 161.
Gregory's Express, 288; estimate of earnings, 294; route through mines, 294; duties of rider, 296; method of business, 301; office in San Francisco, 310.
Dr. Grinsted, first Woodburn friend, 57; takes care of Willie, 74; writes to Argonauts, 255; sends prescription for dysentery, 274; messages from Henry, 94, 116, 224.

Joseph Hackney writes Journal, 111; breaks kingbolt, 112; has trouble crossing Blue River, 127; catches trout, 161; has near accident, 162; upsets wagon, 180; exchanges wagon, 188.
Colonel Hale, 11.
Ham's Fork, Wyoming, 162.
Hannibal, Mo., 110, App. B.
Mrs. Harris, Mary's great-grandmother, 43-44; leaves a legacy, 52.
Elizabeth Harris, Mary's mother, 31; teaches in Litchfield, 31; sings in Hastings choir, 32; prepares to go west, 34; moves to Ill., 34-42; expelled from Hard Shell church, 46; fights cholera, 47; buys farm, 53; deals with Spotted Fever, 55-56; assists Mary, 74; reconciles Henry & Mary, 79-80; donates soap, 83; ill health of, 273; Henry's messages to, 109, 213, 225, 233, 307.
James Harris, Mary's grandfather, 43.
Phoebe Harris, Mary's aunt, 31; sings in Hastings choir, 32; moves to Ill., 34-42; expelled from Hard Shell church, 46; fights cholera, 47; buys farm, 53; teaches children music, 62; Henry's messages to, 213, 225, 233, 307.
Lansford W. Hastings, western enthusiast, 69; attracts Donner Party, 69; writes book of travels, 69; book used by Dr. Knapp, 77.
Thomas Hastings, hymn-writer, has choir in Utica, N. Y., 32.

INDEX

Hangtown, Cal., first mob trial, 214; cholera in, 305.
Mr. Hays of Belleville meets Mary, 52; meets Henry, 313.
Rufus Hitchcock of Sacramento, 203.
J. T. Hoffman, express rider, 294; earnings in 1849, 301.
Hoffman & Page Express Co., 301; volume of business, 301; arrangements during cholera epidemic, 305; reëstablished at Sacramento, 308.
Charles W. Hoit of Lowell, Mass., 228.
Mr. Holton, 275.
Hoosier wagons, at Chicago, 23; likeness to "Prairie Schooner", 81.
Horse Creek, Neb., 142; Horse Creek, Wyo., 150.
Humboldt Desert, first news of, 182; description of, 185-186; hot springs in, 186.
Humboldt Range, 181.
Humboldt River, 178-184; description of, 180.
Humboldt Slough, 184-185.
Huntsville, Mo., 110, App. B.

Ice Springs in Wyoming, 153-154; in Nevada, 178.
Illinois farm home in 1840, 57.
Illinoistown, Ill., 41; Illinoistown, Cal., 194; supplied from Marysville, 195.
Independence, Mo., 97.
Independence Rock, 152.
Indian Territory, 97; described by Henry, 99; mentioned by Hackney, 111.
Indians, attitude toward Emigrants, 165; disappearance from trail in 1849, 154-155, 159; tribes encountered, Diggers, 180-181; Iowas, 112; mission for, 113; customs & dress of, 114; Mission, 237; attitude toward Mexicans & Americans of, 237; Pawnees, 128; fighting Sioux, 131; Pi-utes, 184; Snakes, 166, 168.
Independence Trail, location of, 124; crossed, 127.
Isthmus of Panama, quickest route, 200; rich man's route, 77; Chagres River on, 228; Cruces Trail across, 327-338.

Lewis Jarbo trades for pony, 140; elected Asst. Captain, 170.
Jefferson City, Mo., 100-101.
Jim Jerome, 139.
Jerseyville, Ill., 100, App. B.
Jerseyville Company, preliminary meetings of, 76-77; resolutions of, 105; joined by Henry & partners from Macoupin Co., 112; organized, 117; 2 deaths from cholera, 120-128; final destination Stanislaus River, 193.
Jewel, one of Winthrop's fleet, voyage of, 6-7.
Johnson of Alton, 164.
Jordan, 126.
Junction of Oregon & California trails, 175.

Kansas River, 99.
Kaskaskia, Ill., 39.
Keas family, 28.
Kimball Union Academy in 1833, 16-17.
King, Argonaut, kills goose, 153; trades with Indians, 177-178.
King, farmer, rents Henry's place, 79; message to, 276.
Dr. A. R. Knapp, organizer of Jerseyville Co., 76; chooses overland route to St. Jo, 90; meets Henry, 106; acting captain, 114; elected captain, 119 hunts antelope, 134; reelected captain, 135, 151, 170; mines on Stanislaus, 193; success of, 290.
Robert Knapp, 114.

La Bonte Creek, Wyo., 150.
La Preel Creek, Wyo., 150.
Laramie Mountains called Black Hills, 147, 155.
Laramie Peak first seen, 143.
Laramie River, 143.
Litchfield, N. Y., 31; Jerusaleum Hill in, 32, 34.
Jenny Lind's visit to New York, 302.
Little Blue River, 128-129.
Little Sandy Creek, Neb., 128; Little Sandy Creek, Wyo., 160.
London in Shakespeare's time, 6.
Mr. Long of Woodburn, 275; keeps bathing establishment, 293; son Francis, 293.
Young Loomis of Chesterfield, Ill., 290.
Packet Luella, 90.

Madden of Sacramento, 285.
Madison, Ill., 91, 93; Madison, Mo., 110; App. B.
Mail service between States & California inaugurated, 200; difficulty with, 212; cost to miners, 221, 246; ½ ounce weight allowed, 226; time needed for transit, 235.
E. C. March, 232.
John Marshall, Sutters millwright, 198; discovers gold, 198-199; lack of luck, 277.
Marysville, distribution point for northern mines, 292; described, 305.
Massacre Rocks, 174.
Match Hunt in Woodburn, 30.

INDEX

Maumee Pike, 36; privately owned mud holes, 36.
William Maxey elected Asst. Capt., 119; withdraws, 121.
Merchant's Row, Rutland, Vt., 14, 24, 26.
Middlebury College in 1834, 17; rigorous discipline of, 18; student revolts at, 18; typical bill of, 19; interest in West, 19.
Mining law, growth of, 194.
Mining methods, locality of mines, 218; winter diggings, 218; summer diggings, 218; type of provisions, 219; working a creed, 219; winter living quarters, 222; beds, 225; food, 225; working dry diggings, 23, 236, 240-241; machinery, 248-249; summer living quarters, 279.
Mr. Moore of Shawneetown dies of cholera, 99.
Mormon Ferry (see North Platte Crossing).
Mormon settlement (Salt Lake) freighters from, 141; mail carrier from, 157; news from California at, 177; teams set out from, 177.
Mormons, history of, 137-139.
Mosquito Creek, Kans., 114.
Mt. Ascutney, N. H., 16.
Mt. Carmel, Ind., 40.
Mud Springs, identity of, 213; described, 213-214; size in 1850, 226; women in, 226; Henry's success in, 236, 219, 223.
Musical evenings at Riders', 63; mentioned by Henry, 229.

National Road, directions for survey, 41.
New England Sabbath, 5; New Hampshire Grants, history of, 10-12.
North Platte, Neb., 137.
North Platte River, described by Henry, 157-158.
North Platte Crossing described by Hackney, 151; men killed at, 151; described by Henry, 156.

Oregon trail, reasons for choosing, 77; equipment for crossing, 77-81; breaking in teams, 81; packing wagon, 82; rendezvous of trail, 82-83; traffic protected by treaties, 98; vital importance of grass, 98; methods of traveling, 102; climbing Missouri bluffs, 113; camp life near St. Jo, 115; organization of Companies, 117-119; description, St. Jo to Ft. Kearney, Chapt. 5; weight of load, 124; camp life near Big Nemahah, 124-125; junction with road from Independence, 127; Ft. Kearney to Ft. Laramie, Chapt. 6; storm on prairie, 135-136; buffalo hunt, 136; junction of road from Upper Crossing, 140; camp life near Ft. Laramie, 147-148; bear hunt, 162-163; Ft. Laramie to Ft. Hall, Chapt. 7; Ft. Hall to California trail at Raft River, 171-175; mail stations, at Iowa Agency, 113; at Ft. Kearney, 130; at Ft. Laramie, 145; mileage tally, St. Jo to California mines, 144; exceptional grass in 1849, 149, 257; scouts sent ahead of trains to California, 170, 175; whole journey summarized by Henry, 257.
Pacific Springs, Wyo., 154-155.
Cynthia Page, Henry's mother, character, 13, 308; sells her farm, 312; expects visit from Henry, 312; mentioned by Henry, 311, 313, 318, 223.
Cynthia Page, Henry's daughter, born, 63; description of, 70; writes Henry, 169; learning to sew & knit, 209; first day at school, 216-217; learns to tell lies, 269-270; Henry's messages to, 94, 100, 125, 132, 173, 209, 213, 228, 233, 247, 262, 271, 280, 295, 303, 320.
Egbert Page, Henry's brother, goes west, 311.
Frances Page, Henry's half sister, 4-5; stories of, 5-8; marriage to R. H. Waller, 15; death of, 17; memory of, 329.
Dr. George Page, Henry's brother, going west, 311; mentioned by Henry, 312.
Henry Page, boyhood of, 3-14; decides to go to college, 14; at Kimball Academy, 16-17; at Middlebury College, 17-19; decides to go west, 19-20; first objective Chicago, 20; by stage to Albany, 20; by Erie Canal to Buffalo, 20-22; by steamer to Detroit, 22, by stage to Chicago, 22-23; by stage to Woodburn, 24-25; opens store, 26; his prices, 26; his merchandise, 26; his neighbors, 27-28; friendship with Allards, 28; with young men at tavern, 28; at match hunt, 29; meets Mary, 30; visits Rider farm, 58; courts Mary, 59-60; his wedding, 61; sing in Woodburn choir, 63; his daughter born, 63; visits Rutland, 64-65; his son born, 67; ruined by partner, 67; first quarrel with Van Dorn, 68; misses joining Donner party, 69-70; buys farm, 70; farm work, 70-75; illness of Willie, 74; reconciliation with Van Dorn, 74; hears of gold discovery, 75; investigates Jerseyville Co., 76; decides to go, 77; quarrels with Mary, 77-78; farm rented, 79; sale of property, 79; move to William Rider's, 79; reconciliation with Mary, 83-84; start for Cal., 84-85; from Woodburn to St. Louis, 89-92; decides to go on, 94; from St. Louis to St. Jo, 96-100; loses & finds ox, 98-99; arrives at St. Jo, 101; joins Jerseyville

Co., 106; receives mail, 106; crosses Missouri, 113; meets Jerseyville train, 112, 114; on to Ft. Kearney, 130; to Ft. Laramie, 140; is refused a bed, 156-157; on to Ft. Hall, 168; over Cal. trail to Humboldt, 178 & the mines, 193; leaves Jerseyville train, 193; second quarrel with Van Dorn, 203; leaves Bear River, 203; first visit to Sacramento, 203-210; first earnings, 206; arrangements for winter, 211; first mail from home, 217; earnings at Mud Springs, 219; answers children's letters, 226; sends first gold home, 228; orders toys, 228; working a creek, 238; break-up of partnership, 255-256; joins Rikener, 259; reference to quarrel with Mary, 269; Rikener described, 271; second visit to Sacramento, 272; plans to go on Consumnes, 273; joins Horace Bisbee, 277; visited by Hank & Judge, 278; moves to middle fork of American, 282; third visit to Sacramento, 283; failure of S. K. & A., 283; clerks for Sheldon, 283; death of father, 284; obliged to remain in Cal., 287; attends church, 289; sees Jersey train boys, 289; delay in mail from Rutland, 294; becomes express rider, 294; resolves not to farm again, 299; describes express business, 301; cessation of Mary's letters, 305; sees Hank, 305; visits San Francisco, 308-319; sees Waller, 318; plans for Rutland visit, 318; sells old cabin, 319; receives last letter from Mary, 321; living quarters in Sacramento, 323; legacy from father, 326; journey home, 327-330.

Henry Page's letters, loss of, 174.

John Page, born in London, 6; with Puritans & Gov. Winthrop sails to America, 6-8; arrival in Mass., 8; letter from John Rogers, App. A; house burns, 8; final success, 8.

John Page II, assists 3 times at founding of Groton, Mass., 8.

John B. Page, Henry's brother, 311.

Julia Page, Henry's sister, 9; assists in packing, 16; writes of father's death, 284; mentioned, 311.

Mary Rider Page, Henry's wife, description of, 30; journey from N. Y., 31-42; early days in Carrollton, 42-47; carries food to cholera patients, 47; first engagement, 48; dances with Webster, 48; engagement broken, 50; pioneer days in Woodburn, 51-52; beginning of ill health, 52; parties in Edwardsville, 52; courted by Henry, 59-60; her wedding, 61; sings in Woodburn choir, 63; daughter born, 63; visits Rutland, 64-65; son born, 67; husband's failure, 67; dissuades him from joining Donner party, 70; life on a farm, 70-75; opposition to Cal. venture, 77; quarrel with Henry, 77-78; reconciliation, 79-80; preparations for Cal., 80-81; farewell to Henry, 83-85; receives first letter, 95-96; writes first letter, 103-104; sets children to writing, 169-170; visits her farm, 201-202; caring for sick, 215; recurrence of ill health, 216-220; visits Carrollton, 251; learns of delay in Henry's return, 303-304; meets him in Rutland, 329.

Tinta Page, see Cynthia Page, Henry's daughter.

Dr. William Page, Henry's grandfather, 10; leader for New Hampshire Grants, 10; appointed sheriff of Vt., 11; attempted arrest of, 11; imprisonment, 11; colonel in Continental Army, 12; migration to Vt., 12; builds Bellows Falls Canal, 12-13.

William Page, Henry's father, 4; founds Sunday School, 5; versatility of, 9; understanding of son, 9; stories of, 10-13; assists in building Bellows Falls Canal, 12; religious convictions of, 13, 308; ideas of education at work, 14, 17, 20; loans to Henry, 24, 70; ill-health, 274; death, 284; will, 326.

William Page, Henry's son, born, 67; has typhoid, 74; difficult disposition of, 106; writes to father, 169; visits home farm, 201-202; messages to, 94, 100, 109, 126, 132, 173, 209, 213, 228, 233, 247, 262, 280, 295, 303, 320.

William T. Page, Henry's half brother, 5; has store, 14; repaid loan from first gold, 228; mentioned, 223.

Panama City, 327.

Panic of 1837, 49; in Chicago, 23; ruins Justus Rider, 50.

Papers printed for Cal. trade, 230.

Paris, Mo., 110, App. B.

J. M. Peck, friend of Riders, 45-46; founder of Shurtleff College, 46; founds Woodburn Church, 58.

Pembroke, Wales, 43.

Penknife Sketches No. 5, 315-317.

Peoria Co. at St. Jo, 102.

Perrysburg, Ind., 36.

Peter Perrine joins Co., 120; loses ox, 153; rigs seine for fishing on Humboldt, 178.

Pettingill of Bunkerhill, 164.

Pica, friend of Hank Burton, 319.

Mark Pierson's Store at Alton, 90, 94.

Pike County boys give a dance, 175.

Planters House, St. Louis, supplied with game, 27; seen from river, 92.

Platte Country, 97; described by Henry, 100.

Platte River, location of, 127; reached, 129; South Fork Crossing, 137, 139; South Fork Upper Crossing, 140.
Plattsburg, Mo., 111, App. B.
Pont Neuf River, Ida., 167, 174.
Sarah Price, Mary's grandmother, 43.
Princeton, Ind., 40.

Radnor, Wales, 43.
Raft River, Ida., 174.
Railroad travel in 1844, 64-65.
Railroad to Springfield, Ill., from Meredosia, 296; from Alton, 298.
Record of Macoupin Co., 164.
"Red Bird," famous coach, 20, 24, 65.
Father Redman, Shouting Methodist, 28; mentioned by Henry, 229.
Remsen, N. Y., 44.
Rendezvous of Trail named, 82-83; description of, 97.
Reno Valley, Nev., 188.
Richmond, Mo., 111, App. B.
Alfred Rider, Mary's brother, dies of cholera, 51.
Angie Rider, Mary's sister, 61, takes Tinta to school, 216-217; plans made for, 273.
Christopher & Joan Rider, Mary's grandfather & grandmother, 32, 33.
Cornelia Rider, Mary's sister, sings in Woodburn choir, 63; marries Hank Burton, 67; preparations for Cal. venture, 80-81; cooks for sick, 215; ill-health, 278; stays with Sarah, 221, 321; messages to, 224, 233, 307.
Frances Rider, Mary's sister, called Fras, 54; horsemanship of, 54; sings in Woodburn choir, 63; marriage, 293; messages to, 225, 233, 307.
Evelyn Rider, Mary's cousin, 34, 42.
Ezra Rider, Mary's uncle, 32.
James Rider, Mary's brother, rides Beecher's horse, 45; deals with Spotted Fever, 55-56; sings in Woodburn choir, 63; assists Henry, 74; fights cholera, 47, 215; suggests a partnership, 299, 324; messages to, 225, 233, 307.
John Rider, Mary's uncle, his letters suggest settlement in Ill., 32; comes home to marry, 33; returns with brother to Ill., 34; dies there, 42.
Justus Rider, Mary's father, 31; sings in Hastings choir, 32; moves to Ill., 24-42; keeps open house, 45; shelter early Baptist Church, 46; fights cholera, 47-48; ruined by panic of '37, 50; manager for Dr. Edwards, 50; manager of Woodburn farm, 54; experiments to find cause of cholera, 215; messages to, 213, 225, 233, 307.
Lucy Rider, Mary's cousin, dies of cholera, 215.
Matthew Rider, Mary's uncle, 215.
Richard Rider, Mary's brother, 60; plans made for, 273.
Sarah Rider, Mary's sister, 35, 43; fights cholera, 47, 215; works and plays with Mary, 51-52; sings in Woodburn choir, 63; marries Squire Meade, 74; moves to Carlinville, 216; messages to, 233, 307.
Theresa Rider, Williams baby, dies, 216; mentioned by Henry, 220, 224.
William Rider, Mary's brother, 35, 43; fights cholera, 47, 215; bank clerk at Edwardsville, 50, 52; marriage & return to Woodburn, 60; plays flute, 63; builds a house, 66; assists Henry, 67; shelters Mary, 79; messages to, 213, 224, 233, 307.
William M. Rider, Mary's cousin, 215; expected in Cal., 283; mentioned, 287; arrives, 292; mines on Dry Creek, 293; success there, 302; goes to Stanislaus district, 320.
Rider Hall, origin of name, 66; mentioned by Henry, 208.
Rider's western journey in 1822-23, preparations, 32-34; Litchfield, N. Y. to Terre Haute, Ind., by coach, 34-36; Terre Haute to Evansville, Ind., by flatboat, 36-40; Evansville, Ind., to Carrollton, Ill., by coach, 40-42.
Rifle Regiment bound to Ft. Hall, 162; reports desertion to gold field, 162.
Jacob Rikener, 259, 271.
Joseph Robidoux, the elder, 121.
Joseph Robidoux, founder of St. Joseph, 101.
Michel Robidoux, 121; meets Hackney, 120.
Dr. Robinson of Sacramento, 286.
Rockport, Ill., 100, App. B.
William Rockwell elected Secretary, 119; has tire set, 143.
"Rocky Mountain Men," 121; in Nevada, 177.
John Rogers, App. B.
Rogers Run in Nebraska, 127.
Ruby Mountains, 181.
Rutland, Vt., home of Henry Page, 3; first bank of, 9; revisited, 64-65.

Sacramento in 1849, 209; prices in, 209; flood, 227; building levee, 227; City Hotel, 227; provisions growing cheaper, 239; described in 1850, 272; S. K. & A. banking house, 273; food in, 279; Squatters riots, 285-286; gambling in, 288-289; Sunday bullfights, 289; news of admission to Union, 300-301; cholera in, 304-305.
Sacramento River, 309.

Salt River, Mo., 110, App. B.
San Francisco, new of gold, 200; beginning of cholera in, 299; waning of cholera, 306; death list, App. D; described, 309-310; Post Office in, 310; arrival of mail in, 311; business dull, 318; Portsmouth Square, celebration in, 300; mentioned, 310; Parker House, 310; Pioneer Book Store, 310; Episcopal church building, cost of, 310.
San Francisco Bay, described, 309.
Scott's Bluffs, how named, 142; trader at, 143; blacksmith's charges at, 143; description of, 146.
Widow Sellers, 255.
Shawneetown, Ill., 39, 99.
Henry Sheldon, 8; schoolmate, 15; college classmate, 17; friend in need, 283, 287; advises Express business, 295.
Shipman, Ill., 25.
Shouting Methodists, 28.
Shurtleff College founded by J. M. Peck, 46; seen by Henry, 89.
Sierra Nevadas, seen from Humboldt, 181; crossed, 191; mentioned, 218.
Smith's Fork, Ida., 163.
Snake River, Ida., first seen, 168; called Lewis Fork, 168.
Soda Springs, Ida., 166.
South Pass, location of, 147; described by Hackney, 154; by Henry, 158-159.
Enoch Spaulding, 135.
Mr. Spaulding of Woodburn, 223.
Spotted Fever in Woodburn, 55-56.
Squatters' Association organized, 272; fights Capt. Sutter, 285.
Stage travel, Montreal to Albany, N. Y., 20; Detroit to Chicago, 22; Chicago to Woodburn, 24-25; Evansville, Ind., to E. St. Louis, Ill., 40-41.
Steamboat Bay State, 93; from St. Louis to Independence, 96-97; cholera aboard of, 99.
Steamboat James Monroe, 100.
Steamboat Mary, 98; from Independence to St. Jo, 98-101.
Steamboat travel in 1849, embarking, 91; on Missouri River, 96-101; "Woodpile," 96; "sawyers," 96; "crossings," 96; "sparring," 97; "warping," 97; "sounder," 96; "deadman," 97.
Steamboat Spring, Ida., 167.
Steep Hollow, Cal., 192; first sight of gold washing, 192.
St. Louis in April 1849, 92; cholera in, 171; great fire of, 171-172.
St. Joseph in 1849, 101; founded by Joseph Robidoux, 101; description of, 101; size of Alton, Ill., 102; cholera in, 108.
Stockton, Distribution point of Southern mines, 195.
Strawberry Creek, Wyo., 154.
Andrew Sublette's skill as hunter, 163.
Sublette Cutoff, how named, 163; described, 164.
Success, Winthrop's ship, runs short of food, 7.
Captain Sutter, attempts to rescue Donner Party, 73; builds mill where gold is discovered, 75; early life, 196-197; settles in Cal., 197; purchases fort, 197; protection of emigrants, 196; assistance to Fremont, 197; extent of property, 197; his account of gold discovery, 198-199; driven from Sacramento, 203; rouses antagonism, 272; legal battle with Squatters Association, 285-286; death, 286
Sutter's Fort, formerly Ft. Ross, 197; described, 203.
Sweetwater River, location of, 147; reached, 152; Hackney's description of, valley, 153-154.

Henry Tappan, employed in Woodburn, 28; lives at tavern, 28; visits Rider farm, 58; joins musical evenings, 63; joins Argonauts, 104; elected Treasurer, 119; leaves partnership, 255; visits Henry, 278; loses his money, 278; visits Sacramento, 292; mentioned, 173, 207, 319.
Tom Targee of St. Louis, 173.
Jerome Taylor, 162; shoots grouse, 176; hunting on Humboldt, 179-180; provides grouse soup, 183; hunting on Truckee, 187.
Terre Haute in 1822, 36-37.
Thomas Fork, Ida., 164.
Three Buttes, Ida., 168.
Tinta or Tintie, see Cynthia Page, Henry's daughter.
Teen, see Cornelia Rider.
Mr. & Mrs. Torrey of Sacramento, 324.
Truckee River, 187-189.
Turkey Creek, Neb., 123.

Valley of a Thousand Springs, Nev., 177-178.
Tom Van Dorn, visits Rider Farm, 58; plays fiddle, 59; joins musical evenings, 63; engaged to Henrietta Wilbur, 66-67; 1st quarrel with Henry, 68; reconciliation, 74; marriage, 74; joins Argonauts, 80; starts for Cal., 84-85; with Hank Burton arrives 1st at St. Jo, 100; joins Jerseyville Co., 114; with Hank Burton shortens wagon, 148; hunts lost oxen, 158; dissolves partnership, 255; goes in

with Dr. Knapp, 290; success of, 290; starts home, 292.
Vincennes, Ind., 40.

Patton Walker, Itinerant preacher, 27-28.
R. H. Waller, marries Frances Page, 15; in San Francisco, 311.
Jim Ware, 162.
Warm Springs, Nev., 178-179.
Charles Warren, 168.
Weaver's Dry Diggings, identity of, 215.
Daniel Webster's western tour of 1836, 48.
Dr. Webster, 255.
The Well, Nev., 178.
Western Reserve Pike, 35-36.
Western Stage Coach Company, Detroit eastern terminus of, 22; its road to Chicago, 22; its bridge over Calumet, 22; infested by bandits, 22.
Weston, Mo., 100.
James Whitlock, member of Jerseyville Co., 114; dies of cholera, 120.
Wiggins Ferry, (east St. Louis), 91.
Henrietta Wilbur, stepdaughter of Allard, 28; joins musical evenings, 63; attends Jacksonville Ladies College, 67; marries Tom Van Dorn, 74; preparations for Cal., 80-81; mentioned by Henry, 224.
Judge Willis, 285.
Willow Springs, Wyo., 152.
Gov. Winthrop of Mass., 6; founds colony of New England, 6-8.
Wolf Creek, Kans., mentioned by Hackney, 112; by Henry, 114.
Wood River, Ill., 25; game in bottom land of, 30; baptizing-place, 59.
Woodburn, Ill., between Alton & Carlinville, 23; stage road from Chicago, 24-25; Henry Page opens store at, 26; description of, 25-26; 2nd Illinois home of Riders, 51; Baptist Church built, 58, 59; with heated tank, 59.
Women's Rights Convention at Worcester, Mass., 314; at Salem, Ohio, 314-315; President, Mrs. Davis, 314; early suffragettes, Mrs. Stanton, 314, Lucretia Mott, 314, Lucy Stone, 314; early supporters, Wendell Phillips, 314, William Lloyd Garrison, 315, Whittier, 315, Alcott, 315, Emerson, 315.

Uncle York, free negro from Tenn., 56-57.
Yuba River, reports of gold on, 192.

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